DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 729 SO 016 531

TITLE	The Amityville Experience During World War II.
INSTITUTION	Amityville Union Free School District 6, N.Y.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	62p.; Photographs may not reproduce clearly. For related document, see ED 245 950.
PUB TYPE	Historical Materials (060) -- Collected Works - General (020)
JOURNAL CIT	Journal of Historical Inquiry; v5 1984-85
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Advanced Placement Programs; Advanced Students; Black History; Church Role; Community Study; Females; High Schools; *Local History; Patriotism; Primary Sources; Public Schools; Sex Role; Social History; Student Developed Materials; *United States History
IDENTIFIERS	*New York (Amityville); *World War II

ABSTRACT

An historical journal compiled by advanced placement American history high school students contains 10 articles about the experiences of residents of Amityville, New York, during World War II. Students used secondary sources, first-hand newspaper accounts, oral interviews, and primary source documents to recreate Amityville as it was during those World War II years of personal sacrifice and national commitment. Articles focus on the following topics: efforts made by churches to keep up moral and spiritual well-being, the growth of military plants near Amityville, the impact of shortages on local business, the patriotic efforts of veterans groups such as the American Legion, the contributions of the black community of North Amityville, the role of Amityville's women, and how the war affected the local school district. (RM)

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The Journal of Historical Inquiry

Volume V

The Amityville Experience

ED257729

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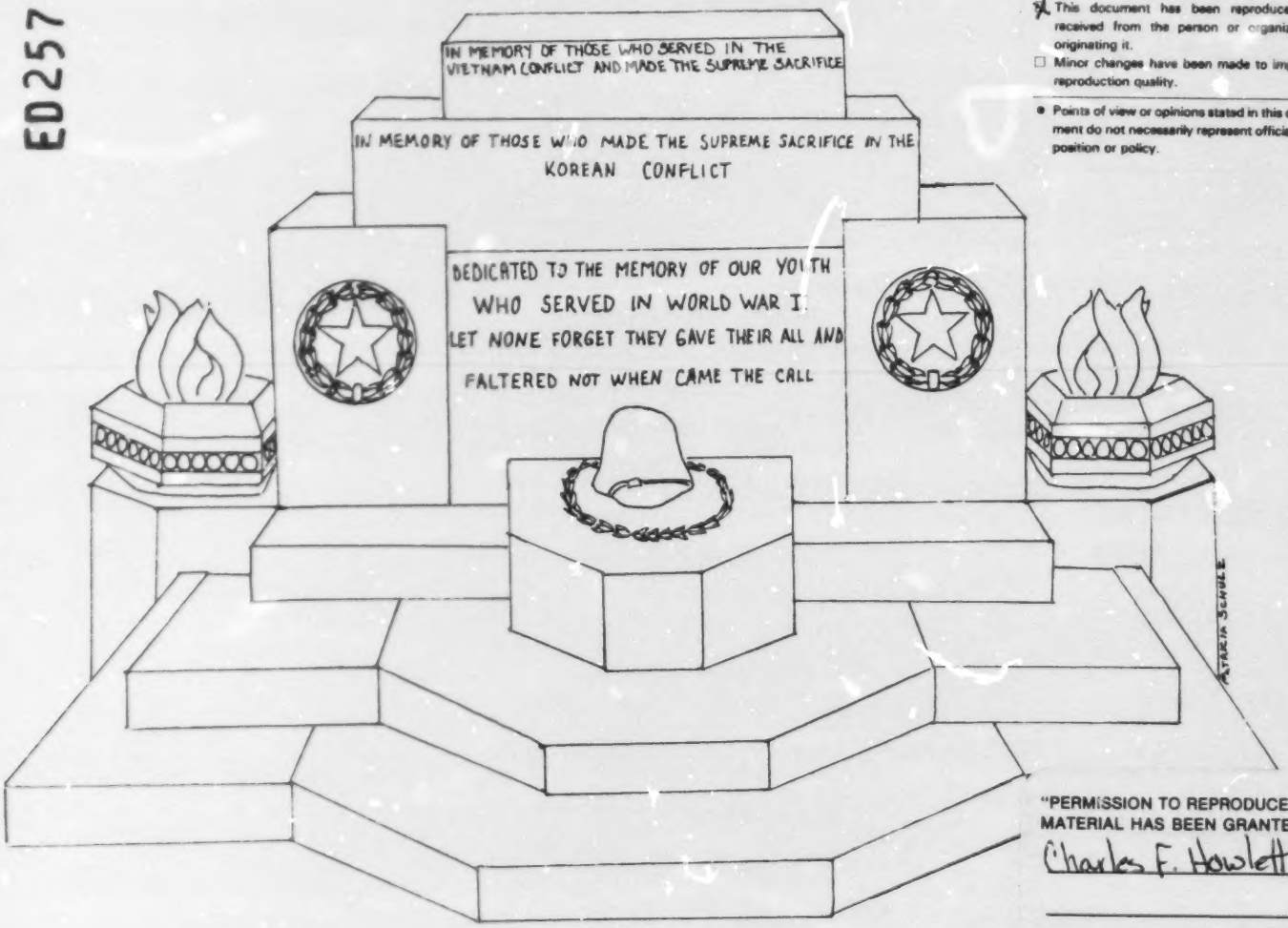
IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM CONFLICT AND MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE
IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE IN THE KOREAN CONFLICT
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR YOUTH
WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR I
LET NONE FORGET THEY GAVE THEIR ALL AND
FALTERED NOT WHEN CAME THE CALL
ATARIA SCHOLE

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During World War II

SO 016 531

Presented by The Advanced Placement Class in American History
Amityville Memorial High School
1984-1985

A NOTE FROM INSTRUCTOR

Volume V of The Journal of Historical Inquiry, the Amityville Memorial High School Advanced Placement History periodical, is dedicated to those local residents, past and present, who served in World War II. In this issue, students have attempted to examine, in detail, the local community of Amityville between the years 1941 and 1945. Using secondary sources, first-hand newspaper accounts, oral interviews and primary documents every effort has been made to recreate Amityville as it was during those years of personal sacrifice and national commitment. Interviews with veterans, the effort made by churches to keep up moral and spiritual well-being, the growth of military plants such as those nearby like Grumman and Republic Aviation, the impact of shortages on local business, the patriotic efforts of veterans groups such as the American Legion, the contributions of the Black Community of North Amityville, the role of Amityville's women and more are covered in this issue. In each article one can see the insight, dedication, and academic approach used by the Advanced Placement students to ascertain a true feeling for the Amityville years, 1941 - 1945. Whatever credits are due belong entirely to the students. They made it possible through hard work and scholarly interest. Thanks also to Mrs. Celeste DeBono for graciously typing this journal.

Charles F. Howlett, Ph.D.

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AMITYVILLE: THE WAR YEARS

Craig Ruyle and Steven Buchmann

"Yesterday December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy..." After more than two years of neutrality the United States was finally forced to enter the largest war the world has ever seen. How did this war affect the small community of Amityville, New York?

This war was so large, so immense, that there was no possible way that anyone could avoid its effects. Amityville was no exception. The war affected many people in different ways. This is true of Mrs. Marion Haight, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Hanson, Mrs. Ingrid Heimer, and Mr. August Klesick.

The war began on September 1, 1939, and as in the First World War, Americans were again promised neutrality. However this "neutrality" was short lived. As in the First World War, America felt for the Allied cause. Even then Hitler was not a very well liked person.

> "Hitler brought this on himself. He did a lot of things that were not accepted by people...A lot of it did come out, what he was doing." (1)

These people were well aware of the fact that there was no possible way in which we could stay out of this war.

> "It was such an overwhelming thing. It was not like Vietnam, a small little country, this was big countries, all the big countries were involved. We could not stay out of it. That's why we knew we would be in it. That's why we knew that eventually it was just a matter of time before we were in it against Germany.. When we gave England fifty destroyers it was automatic, you figure Germany isn't going to stand for our war material in England. You would expect them just on the basis of that to declare war." (2)

For Mrs. Heimer the war began earlier. She was born in Norway and she first felt the war when Norway was invaded in 1940. When it was invaded the ships of the Norweigian Navy were ordered to safe ports in the United States and England. This is where her husband came in. Throughout the war he was a ship handler for the Norweigian Navy and it was his job to keep these ships supplied with food. This however was not her only contact with the war. Her sister, Muriel Christensen, was married to the Norweigian Counsul General in New York. Throughout the war he represented the exiled government of Norway, in London, in New York.

Although all of these people believed that we would eventually enter the war, the way it happened was a total shock. It seems as though no one expected us to fight the Japanese. If we were going to fight anyone it was going to be the Germans.

> "It was a complete surprise. There was very little publicity put on the Pacific side of the war. We were going to get pulled into the war, but against Germany, not Japan. The way we were brought into the war was different." (3)

> "It was a Sunday, the seventh of December and all of a sudden on the radio we heard it. We couldn't believe it." (4)

"We started to cry, I started to cry...Hal was home and the kids and we heard it on the radio. The kids started to cry and I cried, thats why they cried I guess." (5)

It seems that these people were not the only ones who were surprised that the United States so abruptly entered the war. Mrs. Christianson remembers from her husband that the Germans were almost as surprised as we were.

"I remember when we came into the war, you know Dolph was in the Consulate General, and the German Consulates in the United States, they hurried up and burned and tore up everything they could in their consulates so that nothing could be taken so that the Americans would not know anything. Its funny that they did not realize that America was coming into the war and got rid of the stuff before the war." (6)

It is perhaps the way in which we entered the war that caused the resulting patriotic feeling in America. This war created a feeling of unity in America, a feeling so strong that it had never been seen before, and has not been seen since. America was united in a common cause to punish and destroy the forces of oppression and all opponents of freedom.

Amityville was no exception to this patriotic feeling of "rally around the flag." In Amityville the war and the war effort had almost the complete support of the people. They viewed it as something we had to do and they also point out that because we were attacked we had to get even.

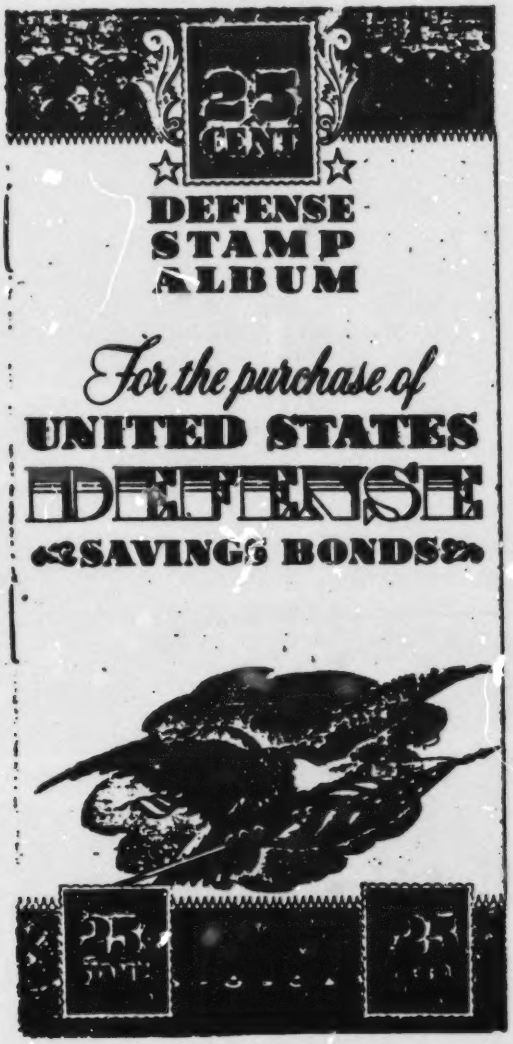
"Everybody was for it because this Nazism was covering the whole world. It was so awful... the Holocaust, the poor Jewish people." (7)

"I think, it was like in the First World War, where everybody thought that Hitler had to be stopped." (8)

With the outbreak of war there also came a wave of paranoia. Even though many people never felt threatened, many "just in case" steps were taken. For instance, the village began to hold bomb dismantling classes. They felt that this was necessary in case of an air raid. They also asked for volunteers with binoculars to be air raid watchers on top of the high school.

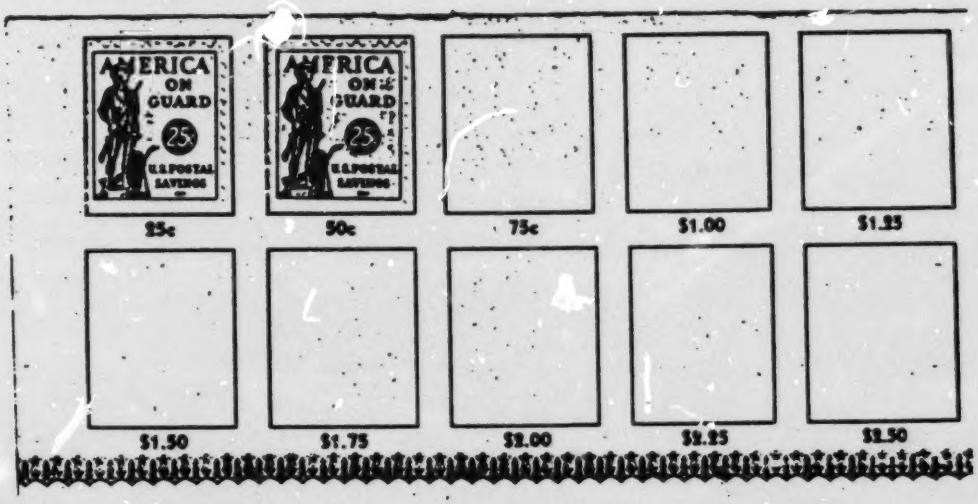
One "just in case" program was the Power Squadron. The Power Squadron a national organization, consisted of members of the community who owned private boats. According to one former member, Mr. August Klesick, they participated in training exercises with the military. These exercises involved transporting troops and supplies in case of an invasion. At all other times they were on standby just in case of a real invasion.

Another "just in case" precautionary program was the manditory blackout. People were required at night to turn out their lights or cover up their windows to prevent any light from showing. There was an air raid warden who would come around in order to make sure that the people complied with the blackout. If so much as a ray of light was showing, you would get a knock on your door. He, of course, became everyone's "favorite" person. However, everyone willingly complied with the blackouts. They felt that it was one more thing they could do to aid the war effort.



This is your Twenty-five Cent Defense Stamp Album. Fill it with 75 Twenty-five Cent Defense Stamps, and it will have a value of $18.75. Exchange it at the post office for a Defense Bond which, after 10 years, will be worth $25. Then start filling another Defense Stamp Album.

Front cover of United States Defense Savings Bond Stamp Album.

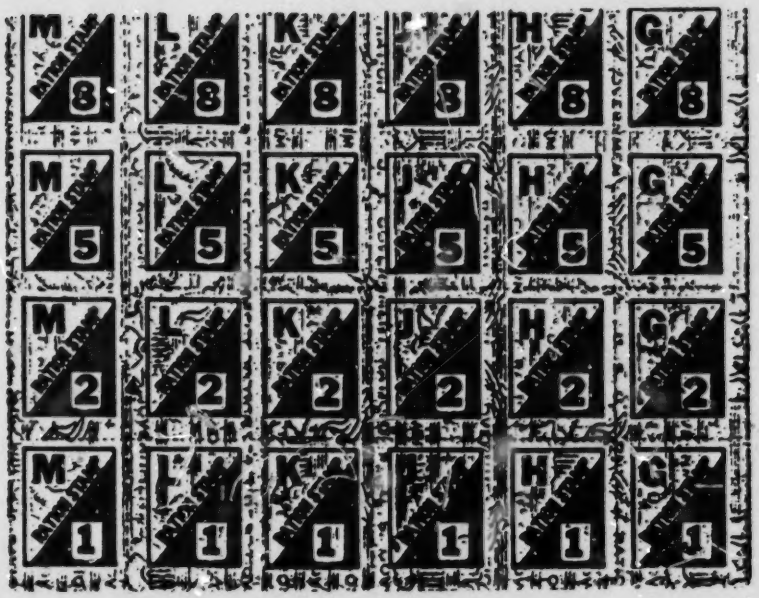


One page of a Defense Savings Bond Album.

The program that had the greatest effect on life was the rationing. Almost everything was rationed, and people had to learn how to use the ration stamps and the ration cards. Even though it was hard, people had to do without many things, they readily accepted it.

> "We were for it because we thought it was doing some good..." (9)
>
> "...You just didn't stop to think much about it..." (10)
>
> "...Everybody wanted to help..." (11)
>
> "...It wasn't a case of your next door neighbor could think one way and you could think another. Everybody felt the same way." (12)

Only in rare cases were extra rations supplied to an individual. One such case involved Mr. Klesick's mother, Beatrice Klesick. In her case, she baked pies and cakes and needed extra sugar, flour and butter rations in order for her to continue baking cakes for others and the ration board.



Ration Stamps: They were used for the purchase of necessary items.

After the war began and America was being pushed around pretty good, the positive attitude of the people did not change. There was a feeling that we had to go out and win back what we lost. The war was far from over and we would never give up. Once America's industry began turning out large amounts of war material and America began to strike back at its enemies, America began to take heart.

> "At that point it would seem that we were invincible almost because when we started going back and winning some of these battles...and the headlines were this big." (13)

It was the headlines that served to keep the spirit of Americans high.

There was a fear and a dislike at the same time for people with German background. People were constantly being reminded to be careful of what they say. This suspicion was increased when it was learned that several German spies landed on Long Island. Because of this, people began to suspect each other. It was also this suspicion that kept Mr. Hansen out of the Navy. After he was drafted there was a problem at a Naval base in Newfoundland. At the time he was an engineer with the Neptune Water Meter Company and some of the people that worked there were of German descent. As his background was Danish he was sent up to Newfoundland. By the time he returned his company had decided that he would be of more use to the war effort at home.

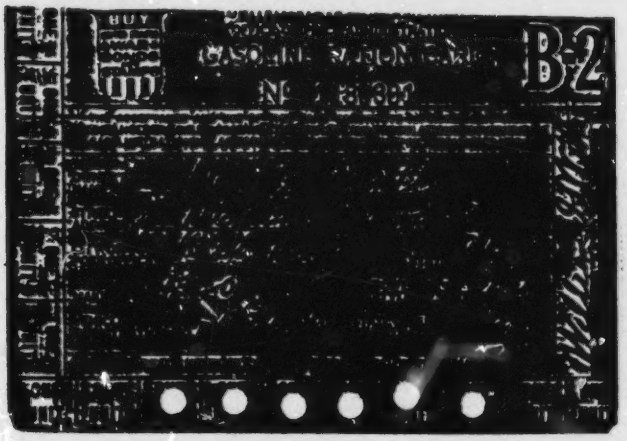
There was a lot of animosity and distrust towards Germans in America. The people of Amityville seemed to have stronger feelings against the Germans than the Japanese. Mrs. Haight speculated that the reason for this was that there were virtually no people of Japanese descent living around Amityville at the time. Mrs. Heimer and Mrs. Christensen also had no love for the Germans as their home country was occupied by the Nazis.

> "During the war I met a woman I had worked with before and she was of German descent and she said, this was after Norway was invaded, 'Oh Muriel, now we're related.' I was so mad. Can you imagine saying something like that to a person whose home, home country where I was born, had been invaded by her people. And then when anyone said "Auf wiedershen" I was so mad." (14)

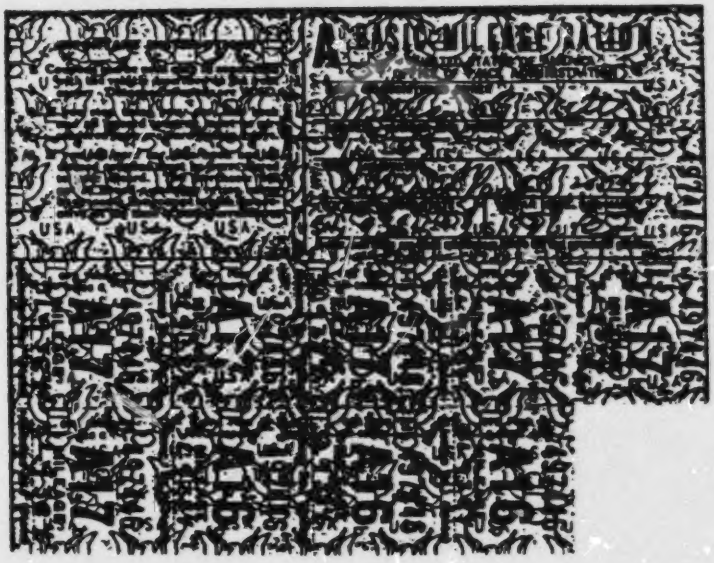
With the blackouts and the air raid drills, the only real fear, according to Mrs. Haight, was the fear that someone close to you would not come back. However, this was one fear that these people did not have. They all considered themselves lucky that they were all spared from the war. The Hansen's considered themselves lucky in that Mr. Hansen was able to remain here. Mrs. Haight considers herself lucky because her husband was stationed on Long Island for much of the war. Mrs. Heimer says she was fortunate because her husband and her family were all here during the war.

As the war progressed and as America began to turn the tide on the Axis, a good feeling came to Amityville. When news of D-Day arrived there was a feeling of happiness in the village.

> "Church bells rang at nine o'clock when the public schools were dismissed so that the scholars might attend services at the churches. The merchants in the village, on the spur of the moment, closed up shop for an hour at eleven o'clock so that they might attend church." (15)



Gasoline Ration Card. The holder of the card was allowed a certain amount of gasoline a week.



Basic Mileage Rations. Each car owner was required to possess such rations.

10 BEST COPY AVAI

When the end of the war finally came, first in Europe and then Japan, the same thing happened again. An air of relief came over Amityville and everyone was glad that it was over.

Throughout the war General George S. Patton seemed to be the hero of most people. They would go to the movies and constantly scan the papers looking for news on their hero. To them he seemed to represent the might of America. This is why it upset many people when he was prevented from entering Germany for political reasons. This was the one mistake that they believe we made. They also all believed that the United States should not have allowed Europe to be divided.

Throughout the war, Amityville was just like any other small community. The people all supported the war and they all made sacrifices in the name of victory. Many people from Amityville answered the call to arms and some of them paid the ultimate price, death, for the quest to preserve the freedom which we have all come to enjoy.

ENDNOTES

1. Interview with Mr. Godfrey Hansen, April 8, 1985
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Interview with Mrs. Muriel Christensen, April 1, 1985
5. Interview with Mrs. Ingrid Heimer, April 1, 1985
6. Same as 4
7. Same as 4
8. Same as 1
9. Same as 1
10. Interview with Mrs. Margaret Hansen, April 8, 1985
11. Same as 1
12. Same as 10
13. Same as 1
14. Same as 4
15. The Amityville Record, June 9, 1944. Pg.1

Bibliography

1. The Amityville Record, 1941-1945
2. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Hansen, April 8, 1985
3. Interview with Mrs. Ingrid Heimer and Mrs. Muriel Christensen, April 1, 1985
4. Interview with Mrs. Marion Haight, March 25, 1985
5. Interview with Mr. August Klesick, April 12, 1985

Involvement and Experiences of the Men of Amityville in World War II and Their Adjustment Back to Civilian Life

Elizabeth Brazinski and Karen Feldman

When World War II was officially declared, communities all over the country became actively involved in many ways to show their support for the cause. The most poignant support a family could offer the war effort was the relinquishing of their sons and daughters to become members of the various branches of the Armed Forces. Some families made the supreme sacrifice when their sons or daughters were killed fulfilling the demands of their assigned duties. Other families thankfully welcomed their children home.

Just because some young people were fortunate enough to return home did not mean they had not seen and had not suffered their share of horrifying and depressing experiences. One would have expected that for most their post-war adjustment to civilian life and to their getting on with their lives would have been extremely difficult, almost impossible in many cases, because of what they had experienced. However, in the cases of the young men whose interview accounts appear below, it can be seen that they accepted the negative aspects of their experiences and maintained a positive attitude toward the fulfillment of their plans for the future. The men featured here were among the many who eventually returned to the Amityville area after the war and resumed their lives with wives and families.

Mr. Harold Geary has been a resident of Copiague for the past thirteen years. He enlisted in the Armed Forces in October of 1940 at the age of 22, while working in a factory in Long Island City. In World War II, Mr. Geary served as a combat engineer in the first infantry division. He participated in three invasions---North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy, for a period of four years. Because of the success of his outfit, it received three presidential citations from Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Mr. George Broschart, who lives in Massapequa, has a granddaughter that attends Amityville Memorial High School. Mr. Broschart had graduated from college before enlisting. When he entered the 9th Air Force and Support Troops, Mr. Broschart left a wife and one-month old son at home. Because his base was the records center, he was saved from the traumatic experience of frontline fighting. He was stationed in the Netherlands, France, and Germany for a total period of 25 months.

Mr. Frank Holub lives on Mole Place in Amityville. On Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941, Mr. Holub was matriculating at Oswego State Teachers College. By August, 1942 he had enlisted and was serving as a bombardier in the Air Force. He was discharged from the service in the fall of 1945 after three years and three months of service.

Mr. Ralph Forman has been a Social Studies teacher at Amityville Memorial High School for the past 30 years. In his senior year of high school, Mr. Forman volunteered for induction into the Armed Forces. Two weeks after graduation he entered the service as a combat infantryman. He served his country all across France and in Germany.

Mr. Frank DiNardo has been a teacher at Amityville Memorial High School in the Science department for the past 18 years. When Mr. DiNardo

enlisted, he was twenty-five years old. During the daytime he worked as a private secretary and in the evenings he attended college as a pre-medical student. He entered the United States and the European Theater of Operations (ETO) as a medical lab technician and medical corpsman and eventually served aboard an Army transport which crossed the oceans in the ETO. Later he became a Transportation Corps Officer. While serving in these positions he dealt with many of the wounded. He participated in the war effort for a total of four years.

Mrs. Albina Martin, a long-time resident of Amityville, lived in the village even before the outbreak of World War II. Her two brothers, whose names she asked to be kept anonymous, both participated in the war effort. At the beginning of the war, one brother had graduated from Packard Business School and was working as an accountant, and the other was studying engineering.

In examining each person's involvement in the war, the harrowing and depressing occurrences that they experienced became clear. Their comments show the true horrors of war.

Mr. Geary was wounded in the chest and arm on November 9th, his very first day of combat in North Africa. He was sent from the front to a hospital in St. Cloud. Eventually he returned to his outfit on the frontlines. Mr. Geary went on to say, "I was wounded twice. The second time I was hit in the shin bone with a piece of shrapnal. It was nothing. Everytime you'd get wounded you'd get a Purple Heart. One was enough!" (1) Even though he laughed as he related this, some of his experiences in the war were very devastating ones. For example, one of the hardest things for him to accept was seeing "a young boy there...God only knows when he was killed. He was on his elbows and his knees and that's how he died. He must have ducked down when he heard a shell coming in...I kon't know. They say you can't hear them when they are going to hit you. He must have heard something coming and he went down. It must have gotter him in the back of the head or...I couldn't see...I didn't want to stay there and look at it. (2) Another experience was even more horrible. "The worst thing I had ever seen...We had broken out of Normandy...One of our tanks got hit. They sent us up to see what we could do about getting it off the road, to clear the road. Well, it caught on fire. The Germans hit it about four times with an 88 mm, which was one of the fastest guns the Germans had. It was unbelievable---unbelievable! The muzzle velocity...they hit it about four times right through the turret. Everything caught on fire inside the tank. The fire was so bad it melted the bottom right out of the tank. We had to go in and get what was left of these guys on a shovel and put them on the side of the road and try to find their dogtags. Their dogtags were melted. That was the worst thing---the worst thing I ever saw, that I ever experienced...picking up somebody's headbone and not knowing who it is and there's nothing on it but just a bone. The whole inside of the tank was gone. That was about the worst, outside of the young boy before. By that time I was about 25 or 26, Eleanor Roosevelt said, 'No soldier is any good after 26,' and I was going to cash in on that! No soldier is good after 26! I left my outfit and went back to Paris. They put me in a hospital in Paris. I weighed some 140 pounds and my nerves were gone...shot! They gave me shock treatments." (3)

Because Mr. Broschart was saved the traumatic experience of frontline fighting, his experiences were not as harrowing. At one time he prepared to do hand-to-hand combat, but fortunately the time never arose when he

used the training. Thus, he was not injured, but felt that the thing he was deprived of the most was being with his wife and son.

Mr. Holub's experiences had a great impact on his thinking. "Toward the end of my training for overseas duty, I was involved in a mid-air collission. While recuperating in the hospital, I began to reflect and think about how short life can be, particularly in war-time. I decided to get married when I left the hospital. This I did and a few months later we had our picture in Life Magazine as part of a story on the Air Force Convalescent Center in Pawling, New York. Nine months later, I was on my way overseas to Italy. I participated in 28 bombing missions throughout Central Europe---two were over Vienna." (4)

While functioning as a medical corpsman, Mr. DiNardo dealt with many wounded soldiers. He fortunately was not forced to face hand-to-hand combat. "I never had to shoot anyone...Thank God!" (5) He did receive injury to his left eardrum as a result of an explosion of munitions.

Because he saw firsthand combat more extensively than the others who were interviewed, Mr. Forman's experiences were more traumatic than those of the others. The most difficult realization for him to deal with was the idea that "someone on the other side was trying to kill me and, if I didn't want to die, I had to kill him first. You have to adapt to the condition. It's awfully hard to describe. To sink to such a low level...it's almost impossible for anybody who hasn't been through the same circumstances to really understand it. You live like an animal, you act like an animal, and you adopt a different philosophy. You live for the second and not for the minute because the next minute you may be dead. And it's the only type of philosophy you can adopt so that you can survive. It's a matter of luck and skill. So that's what you had to do...you had to be awfully lucky and skillful to try to get through the war. By the time I got hit, out of 189 in my original company, there were only about 6 of us left." (6)

When asked what the toughest thing to accept was after the war he replied: "The toughest thing to accept...? To wake up and discover they had amputated your limb. To accept that and to then look around and realize that that wasn't the worst thing that could have happened to you. I think the worst thing is to lose your sight. Then you are completely helpless. And I've seen where there wasn't a mark on this guy that you could see...a big, tall, good-looking guy, but blind. I've seen some sad sights where the brain wounds left the person with the mentality of a kid two years old, but they didn't realize it. They had to be led around by the hand." (7)

During his hospitalization, while recovering from his amputation, Mr. Forman even had to face the horrors of drug addiction. "One of the worst injustices done to me was with the abuse of narcotics by the medical doctors who created a lot of addicts. I was in excruciating pain and I was getting a shot of morphine about every 2 1/2 hours around the clock. Then I built up a tolerance to it and then they'd give me a shot of it that would have killed a horse. Then they'd switch to codeine and go through the same process. Then they'd switch to Panapon, a drug made in India. Actually my arms got so tough, so full of scar tissue marks that, when they'd try to hit my arm with a needle, they'd hit a tough spot and the needle would bend. I was addicted. If you've got the willpower, there's nothing you can't do. I decided that I was going to get off it. I had a very cooperative nurse, a little Southern gal, and I told her every day I

was going to go longer between shots...but when I called, that would mean I had reached the limit of my endurance and she'd better come running. So she went along, cooperating. The captain said to give me a placebo---a sterile water shot to see if I was faking. I took the shot and there was no release from the pain. I reached over and threw the lamp across the room and said, 'Hey! I'm not kiddin.' Eventually I was going from morning to evening without a shot. It wasn't easy; it was darn hard. They also had me on Nembuthol---sleeping pills---and I had to get off that so I could sleep on my own. What they gave me was paraldehyde...I'll never forget that 'cause it sounds like formaldehyde and it smells like it too. They gave you a little jigger of it. You had to toss it down just like a shot and you hoped it got down! You just had to have willpower..." (8)

In reviewing the appalling experiences of those questioned, one would assume that they found assimilation back into American civilian society extremely difficult. It was surprising to find that this was actually not the case. These people overcame all obstacles and continued their lives after returning from the atrocities of war.

Before the war, Mr. Geary had worked for the New York Sun and in a factory in Long Island City. He was planning to go back to high school during the day and work at night. It was at this point in his life that the war broke out and he enlisted. This involvement in the war did alter his views of life. "I didn't even want to step on a bug to kill it. You suddenly looked at the lowest forms of life...you know, you never saw them before...you get what I mean? Until you've gone through something like that...I don't care if it's the lowest thing---a snail. You wouldn't touch it---step on it. It does...it changes you. It's such senseless killing... for politics...it'so senseless, ridiculous!" (9)

Mr. Geary was not soured on life, however. He only cherished it more. He went back to work two weeks after his discharge from Fort Dix and married later that year. He has 7 children---5 boys and 2 girls. Mr. Geary summed up the full extent of his difficulty in adjusting to peacetime life when he said: "I didn't have any hangups, if that's what you mean." (10)

Before leaving for Europe, Mr. Broschart had a wife and a one-month old child. His plans to go into Business Administration were postponed when the war began. His assimilation into the flow of civilian life after the war seemed relatively smooth. His wife, Margaret, said, "I didn't see any difference in him. We just kind of picked up where we left off. No injuries, nothing physical...We were just so glad to have him home." (11) Mr. Broschart explained his adjustment in this way: "It wasn't easy and it wasn't difficult. Mentally I had no problems adjusting." (12)

Mr. Holub explained that most of his early life, before the war, was dictated by the Depression. "After high school it was impossible to get a job. Fortunately, I met a teacher who felt that I had the potential to become a good teacher, and, since no money was available, induced me to try to work my way through college. I did, for 2 1/2 years. I was matriculating at Oswego State Teachers College on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941."

As a result of the mid-air collision that he experienced during the war, Mr. Holub eventually developed arthritis in his right hip. He recently had an artificial hip joint implanted.

Mr. Holub stated that he had found it difficult to resume civilian life with a ready-made family, including a daughter and wife. He continued his education at New York University. He became a teacher in 1947 and five years later became a principal.

Mr. Holub's summary of his readjustment is stated: "I went into the war as an immature student and came out an officer (first lieutenant), a husband and a father." (13)

Mr. Forman entered the Army two weeks after his graduation from high school. He described himself in those years before the war in this fashion: "I was the outstanding athlete in the high school and I was sports-oriented all the way along the line. I was captain of the wrestling team for 3 years and a four-year letterman. I was also captain of the track team my senior year. So I had wanted to major in 'phys. ed.' in college." (14)

Considering the horrors of the long duration of frontline fighting, of the loss of his leg, and of drug addiction that resulted from his involvement in the war, one would assume that these factors would have destroyed him. However, nothing hindered him from achieving all that he could. "I went away a kid and I came back a man---that's for sure! I knew what I wanted. "A couple of guys were being hospitalized at Walter Reed Hospital and Caroline (Mr. Forman's wife) came along with two of her SPAR friends... that's how we met. She was in the Coast Guard, the Spars. You grew up in a hurry and you knew what you wanted. She had been in the service for over a year so she had been on her own too. We knew each other 6 weeks and we got married." (15)

After overcoming all those horrible experiences in the war, Mr. Forman was tested further. He was faced with the adjustment to civilian life with a high school diploma and a wife to support. "I didn't have time to worry about things...how many options did I have? I had to do something to support my wife, so that's when I started college. It was hard work all the way through. I always wanted to work with high school students. I wanted to be a 'phys. ed.' instructor. My second love was history, so I just reversed it---majored in history and did coaching on the side." (16)

"I went to college on the G.I. Bill of Rights. I received a B.A. from Hofstra and a M.A. from Columbia in four years...went straight through." (17) At that point Mr. Forman was offered a job teaching at Columbia with the provision that he would go on for his doctorate. However, the age group he wanted to teach was high school students. That is when he got a job teaching at Amityville Memorial High School.

Mr. Forman explained his feelings about his readjustment in this way: "They say 'Time tempers all wounds.'---it is very true. You get over those things as time goes by. For a great many years I couldn't even talk about them (war experiences) with my wife. It would bring back so many memories of horrible things I had been through. For seven years I couldn't even talk about it. But I wasn't soured on life. I was lucky to be alive and I knew it. There wasn't anything to hold me back and I felt I could do it." (18)

Mr. DiNardo was working as a private secretary during the day and attending college as a pre-medical student at night when the war interrupted his plans. Life for Mr. DiNardo at that time was very positive:

"Life was a great adventure. We were just coming out of the depression years. I was young and eager to get along with my life." (19)

After a four-year involvement in the war he returned to the United States and married a Lieutenant J.G. in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. Mr. DiNardo, in a response to the question: "Did you find adjusting to civilian life very difficult?", answered: "Not at all. My plans for life were interrupted, but my plans were the same---to study medicine." (20)

We asked Mrs. Martin if she felt that her brothers, or any of the other Amityville men who were involved in the war, were altered by their experiences in it and she rather humorously responded: "I'm trying to think of people---in the midst of the war...I don't think it changed them " _____", he was at Normandy...he was odd before he went in and odd when he came out!" (21)

How could these men suffer through the agonizing mental and physical pain caused by war and still retain the ability to reassimilate into civilian life with little or no difficulty? This question, perhaps, has several answers. To begin with, the men that entered the war from the Amityville area were of a certain stamp. They came from small towns where all the inhabitants knew each other. They were down-to-earth, homebody-type people with solid backgrounds. They accepted whatever happened to them in a stoic fashion and continued in their quiet ways. Furthermore, these people had just finished suffering through the Depression. They understood the meaning of sacrifice and had experience coping with life's calamities. These people rather calmly accepted the inevitability of war.

In addition to accepting our nation's involvement in World War II, these men also accepted their personal involvement in it. All of those interviewed had voluntarily registered for the service in the Armed Forces. This is accounted for by the widespread support of our country's entry into the war. "There was really no criticism of our country's decision to enter the war. We weren't going into places we had no business going into. It was a wholehearted effort on the part of the country. Everybody figured we had been attacked." (22)

Because the men accepted the fact that they had to fight in the war, they also accepted any suffering they were forced to undergo as a result of it. Afterwards, they stoically returned to continue pursuing their lives. They were aided in this endeavor by the knowledge that most everyone else was in the same situation. "You looked at five people on the street and you knew that at least three of them had been in the service somewhere." (23) George Broschart summed up America's overall reaction to its involvement in World War II most appropriately: "Everybody felt the same way. It was like getting punched in the face, what happened to our country, and we felt we better do something about it. When it's over with, it's over. That's it...go back home." (24)

They were victorious soldiers, sailors, marines, and pilots returning home from war. The entire country cheered their return.

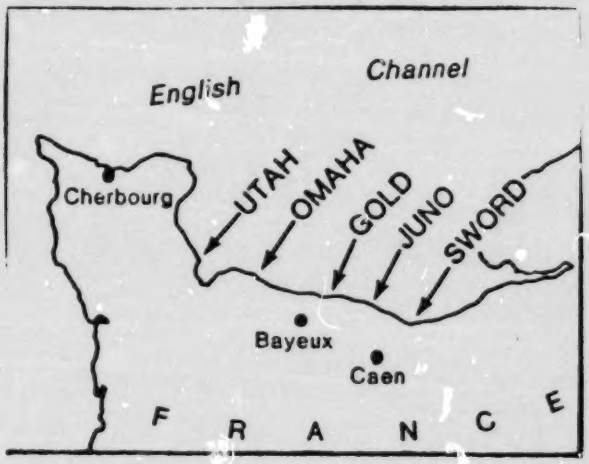
The manner in which these young men recouped their lives symbolizes a spirit of survival that many young people followed. Their survival was made somewhat easier because their families were waiting for them to offer to them necessary emotional support.

In addition to this kind of spiritual and emotional support, they also received financial support from the government in the form of monies provided by the G.I. Bill of Rights to be used for continuing their education and for loans that would facilitate more easily their buying of homes for themselves and their new families.

All this spirit of survival and show of support would not have had any lasting meaning if these young men, and others, had not had the self-determination to create positive futures for themselves and their families.

Mr. Harold Geary, front row center

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Geary, 1984



On June 6, 1944, American, British and Canadian troops landed at five code-named beaches on France's Normandy coast. Utah was the first beach invaded and casualties were heaviest at Omaha.

Mr. George Broschart

Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Forman

ENDNOTES

1. Interview with Mr. Harold Geary, February, 1985.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Interview with Mr. Frank Holub, January, 1985.
5. Interview with Mr. Frank DiNardo, January, 1985.
6. Interview with Mr. Ralph Forman, December, 1984.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Interview with Mr. Harold Geary, February, 1985.
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11. Interview with Mr. George Broschart, February, 1985.
12. Ibid.
13. Interview with Mr. Frank Holub, January, 1985.
14. Interview with Mr. Ralph Forman, December, 1984.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Interview with Mr. Frank DiNardo, January, 1985.
20. Ibid.
21. Interview with Mrs. Albina Martens, December, 1984.
22. Interview with Mr. George Broschart, February, 1985.
23. Interview with Mr. Harold Geary, February, 1985.
24. Interview with Mr. George Broschart, December, 1984.

COUNTERPOINTS IN COMBAT
A comparison of Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Experiences

Patricia Schulz and Paula Tavormina

Despite the generalized view history takes, the war was a personal experience to those who fought it, and their reactions varied greatly. We have interviewed several veterans who served in various branches of the armed forces. These men were Mr. William Kretz, who served in the 29th Marine Corps, Mr. Donald Burns, who served in the Air Force, Mr. Ralph Forman, a veteran of the Army Infantry, and Mr. Louis Valenti, who served on the Aircraft Carrier Intrepid in the Navy.

They all experienced different types of combat which has influenced their attitudes towards their life.

> "It (attitude) changed completely! When you would firsthand see your friends dying, being killed right in front of you, and you had to take somebody else's life, sure you became hardened. If you don't become hardened in combat you can't survive."

To give the reader a better image of each veteran we have transcribed the following interviews which were based on the same set of questions.

Our first interview was with Mr. William Kretz, former principal of the 6th grade at E.W. Miles Amityville Junior High School.

Q. What branch of the military did you serve in?

A. I was in the 29th Marine Corps and served in the Pacific. The big battle was Iwo Jima where they took the famous picture of the soldiers raising the flag. At the time I was on a hospital ship wounded.

Q. How old were you?

A. I was 18.

Q. Did you go into the war because you wanted to or because you had to?

A. I volunteered.

Q. What were your plans before the war? How had they changed?

A. I was ready to go to college. When I got out of the service I went to Adelphi then Springfield.

Our next interview was with Mr. Louis Valenti, a present day resident of Amityville.

Q. What branch of the military did you serve in?

A. I was in the Navy on the Aircraft Carrier, the Intrepid.

Q. How old were you?

A. I was 18 1/2, I went straight from high school.

Q. Did you go into the war because you wanted to or because you had to?

A. I was drafted, but I chose the Navy because we had a choice at that point.

Q. What were your plans before the war? How had they changed?

A. I really don't know. There weren't a lot of plans allowed to be made. The war was started when we were about 15 in Europe and when we were 16 it started in the Pacific. As we got older we couldn't hold any kind of a job because we were going to be drafted.

Q. Were your feelings or outlooks toward living any different from when you left and when you came back?

A. For a while, yes, but nothing that remained permanent, especially nothing like the Vietnamese, if that's what you mean.

Our third interview was with Mr. Donald Burns who now resides in Amityville.

Q. What branch of the military did you serve in?

A. I was in the Air Force, as a bombardier navigator. I flew missions from Italy up into Germany.

Q. How old were you?

A. I was 18 or 19.

Q. Did you go into the war because you wanted to or because you had to?

A. I was in college and volunteered; I took the test and I was finally called (for service). I was overseas for one year and in (service) for three years.

Q. What were your plans before the war? How had they changed?

A. When I was in college, I went in for business. When I came out I had to start all over again. I took an engineering course and became an engineer.

Q. What were your feelings or outlooks toward life when you came back?

A. Well, that's hard to answer. When I came back I never wanted to leave home again. I had been all around the world, seen things and done things. I was very content when I came back. I had my adventures and I was ready to calm down.

Our final interview was with Mr. Ralph Forman who teaches history at Amityville Memorial High School.

Q. What branch of the military did you serve in?

A. I was in the Army Infantry for three years. I was all over. I took my basic infantry training in Georgia. They sent me to Penn Military Colege. I was training to be an engineer. We took our training, prepared for combat, then we went overseas. We were in England for about two weeks, then we were shipped over to France. We missed the invasion by about two weeks. I was in combat for about ten months, then I was wounded.

Q. How old were you?

A. I was about 18 or 19.

Q. Did you go into the war because you wanted to or because you had to?

A. I volunteered for enlistment. I was a senior in high school, and I went down to my draft board and volunteered for enlistment right after high school. Two weeks after high school I was in the service.

Q. What were your plans before the war? How had they changed?

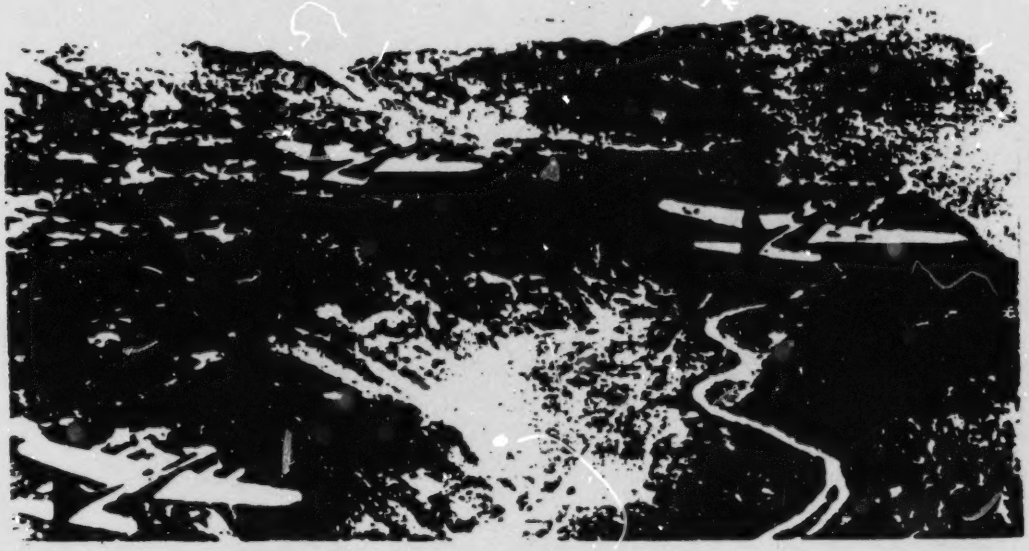
A. I was going to go to college and major in Physical Education.

Q. What were your feelings or outlooks toward life when you left and when you came back?

A. It changed completely! When you would firsthand see your friends dying, being killed right in front of you, and you had to take somebody else's life, sure you become hardened. If you don't become hardened in combat you can't survive. I remember my father wrote a letter asking me "What do you want to do after you get out of the service when you come home". I wrote back "Don't ask me that question again." because you adopt the philosophy of living for that second. If you start thinking "what am I going to do for the next day", it weighs on your mind that there may not be a next day. So you live for the minute and you don't think of the future. You just do what has to be done at that moment.

And when you come back, you've seen a lot of death and destruction, and you can't erase it. I can tell you I hate war, there's no doubt about it. Anyone that's been in it doesn't want to see it again. It's just horrible. I know I couldn't talk about it for five or six years but as time goes by, now I can discuss it. But I had nightmares for a very long time.

When matters of great importance arise, more often than not the opinions of the Americans are divided. In the beginning, World War II was no different. Although there was a general sympathy towards France and



U. S. Aircraft flying to bomb Japan

Infantrymen patrol a city in Germany a few hours before its capitulation

Great Britain, it had not been strong enough to coerce the nation into actual fighting. At that point, there were three extremes:

> "Those few people who thought the United States ought to go to war on the side of the democracies; those even fewer people who thought the U. S. ought to support Germany....- and a much larger group who thought the United States ought to avoid any war under any circumstances". (1)

The American viewpoint could not remain impartial for long, despite Roosevelt's declaration of neutrality on September 5, 1939. Events like the defeat of Poland in 1939 and then France in 1940 were shocking enough to persuade Roosevelt to ask Congress to alter the Neutrality Acts and employ the "cash and carry" policy in favor of the Allies. The next year, after his re-election, the president won the power to enact the Lend Lease Policy, for European countries could no longer afford to pay for goods and services.

Although Americans were clearly tending to sympathize with the Allied cause, a dramatic event was necessary for American intervention:

> "If the United States were to go to war, some massive overt shock was required". (2)

The shock came with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Few, if any, events in history have affected the American public as Pearl Harbor did. From that point on, with close to unanimous support, America joined the war determined to defeat the enemy.

The reaction of the nation is still clear in the minds of the men we interviewed; it seemed that everyone was willing to sacrifice for one cause. As Mr. Forman told us:

> "No one wanted to get involved with the war to begin with except maybe a few young kids who were willing to get involved and were 'gung ho' but when we were attacked the whole attitude changed."

And as the magazine Stars and Stripes observed:

> "It was a bad case of the jitters, but a healthy case. Uncle Sam was mad and scared and then damned mad. He was waked up. And he quickly settled down to the long, grim, deadly job. The heroes of Bataan would be avenged. Industry would drop its quarrels, the whole manpower of the nation would be mobilized and once again American armies would march across the battlefields of the world, this time, as President Roosevelt said through clenched teeth -- not only to win the war but to win the peace that will come after it." (3)

Throughout the war there was a certain unity among the people of the country. "Everybody was really close, and each family used to put a star in the window to represent each person in war. Those stars linked everyone together." (4)

But what about the men who served? Were their feelings similar? How had the war and their specific experiences changed them? This is the

question that originally inspired us, and which proved to be the most obvious outcome of our interviews. We heard four different wartime experiences from men who had entered the service at an early age. Where did the similarities and differences lie, and why had they come about? Perhaps we can draw conclusions, but first it's necessary to relate what we discovered.

Although the veterans had many contrasting views they did agree on some points. One of these points was they all felt they were fighting the war out of a sense of loyalty and nationalism to the United States.

> "We all felt we had to fight because of what the Japanese did at Pearl Harbor. We were going to beat them, that's all, there were no doubts about it." (5)

> "The way we felt was that we wanted to stay there until the war was over. We didn't want to go back until we were finished, at least that's the way my corps felt. It was something we had to do. I think the whole U. S. in general felt that way, after things were taken care of then we could relax." (6)

> "I volunteered for induction, that meant our country was in a pretty bad fix. We were taking a terrible hammering at Pearl Harbor and I know that when I was a senior in high school it was the most depressing thing to hear about. Every time the news came we'd hear about somewhere else where we were losing. Our backs were against the wall and every fellow wanted to do his part. A lot of girls wanted to do their part and went in too." (7)

> "We wanted to stay there until the war was over because of what happened in Pearl Harbor. They killed seven or eight thousand people in a couple of hours." (8)

Another point agreed upon by the veterans was that those at home worked together as did the men in combat.

> "This was a very patriotic time. We hadn't started the war. Pearl Harbor was a sneak attack and the American public was furious. Everyone cooperated on the home front and the battle front as well. Girls went into the war plants and worked double shifts to release the men for active duty. You had women in the service too. My wife enlisted in the Coast Guard when she was old enough." (9)

> "At that time the country did pull together, did push for a victory and was willing to fight and sacrifice for a victory against the Germans." (10)

> "Everyone was effected by the war. My mother, who hadn't worked in years, got a job in a small factory down by Amityville Beach. My father was at Republic Airfield, which built parts for airplanes." (11)

The most oustanding contrasts seem to have been a result of the kind of warfare the men experienced, and relates to how and where they served. Donald Burns, the ex-bombardier navigator told us this.

"I was in the Air Force and the battle line was hundreds of miles away from us. I flew missions from Italy up on to Germany. It was still very exciting. We were stationed in Italy, which was a very wonderful place to fight a war if you have to fight a war anyplace. And I was seeing quite a bit of Italy even though we were stationed in the middle of a wheat field. I had R & R where you go to Rome, Naples, or the Island of Capri."

When we expressed our surprise, he remarked,

"And you thought it was a really heavy war."

When we interviewed Mr. Forman, we heard a very different story, and a different attitude.

"Adventuresome? I saw things I thought were great but you know you were going to combat, there's no way to look at it as a big lark or just having a good time. That is unless you weren't in combat. I was at the front lines, so that can make a tremendous difference. I suppose in some of the other branches of the forces it could be a lot of fun."

"One thing that the Infantry could never understand was "flight fatigue". After a certain number of missions over Germany, they (the Air Force fliers) had flight fatigue and were rotated back home. Hell, we were in there twenty-four hours of the day! We never got rotated back home. We didn't even have clothes to change into for over three months."

And as Mr. Valenti commented,

"Of all people that were in the war, the rifleman was the one who saw the war. It was right on top of you all the time."

"We (on the Intrepid) were hit by suicide planes and were there before the fighting. We were there to strategically soften up the enemy by attacking ships or other landbased aircraft. The longest time we were in action was three and a half months when we assaulted the Philippines."

"The Navy and the Air Force usually had a better time. The Air Force had a base to come back to at night."

In the same way, we got different responses to the question, "Did you ever have second thoughts, and want to come home?" Mr. Valenti told us,

"I wasn't too caring at that point. The only time you worried was when you were right in the middle of something. As a matter of fact sometimes when I was on leave I wanted to go back (to service) earlier. But you always have a regret when you are out and your boat is hit. You always have that one fleeting regret as you try to crawl into a crack in the splinter shield near the wall."

Mr. Kretz, who served in the Marines said,

"No way we felt was that we wanted to stay there until the war was over. We didn't want to go back until we finished, at least that's the way my corps felt. It was something we had to do. I think the whole United States in general felt that way. After things were taken care of, then we could relax."

Mr. Forman -

"Everybody wanted to go home! They didn't want to be over there killing people! Nobody wanted that situation. But I volunteered for induction. Nobody wanted to see anyone go off to war."

Each man had an attitude towards patriotism which really made their story unique.

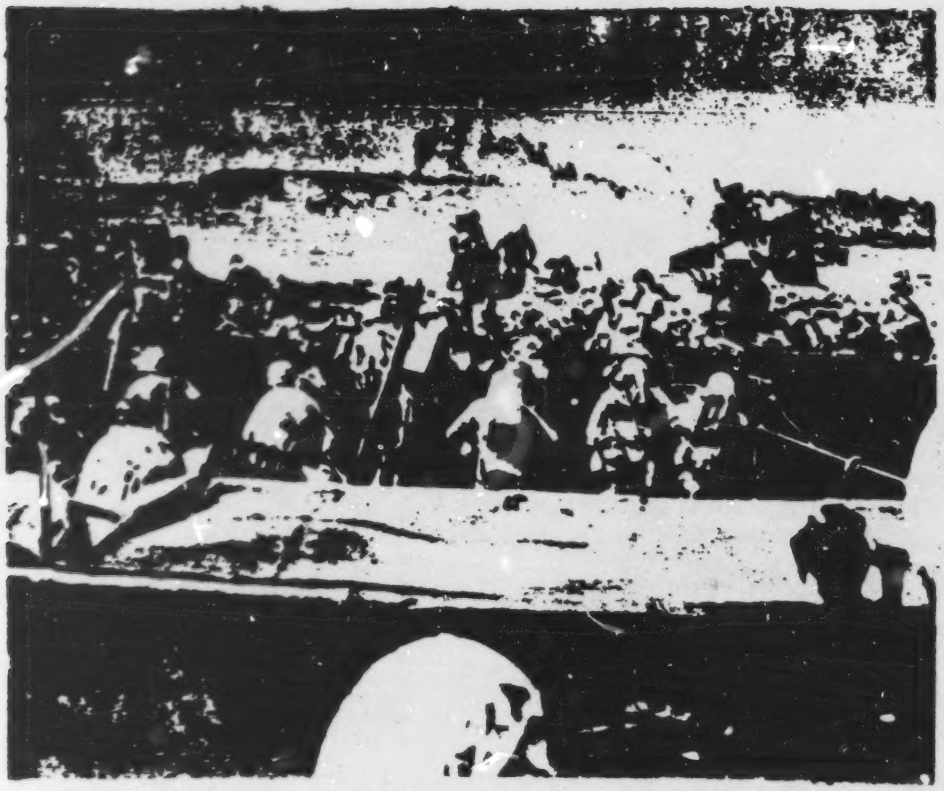
"When the war was over, we came back on the Queen Mary with other wounded men. There must have been twenty thousand other troops, and when we saw the Statue of Liberty we all went to one side and the captain had to warn us that the boat was listing to that side. I can remember that statue was the most beautiful sight we ever saw. Until that time I had never paid much attention to it, but then it seemed to be the symbol for all we had been fighting for. It was a great feeling."

".....After you've come back, you've seen a lot of death and destruction. I tell you I hate war, there's no doubt about it. Anyone that's been in it doesn't want to see it again. It's just perfectly horrible. I know for five or six years I couldn't talk about it. But since time has gone by now I can discuss it. But you had nightmares for quite a while." (12)

"Many times, after you knew what was out there, even though you weren't afraid, you'd resent someone waving a flag at you. Especially a civilian."

"During the first year of the war Robert Taylor made a movie called "The Fighting Lady" and after that, every carrier was called the fighting lady. One time when we were being repaired in San Francisco, someone had set two big signs at the end of each gangway which read 'get this fighting lady back to sea'. The first group of sailors off duty threw both of them in the water. It didn't mean they were unwilling to fight, they just did things like that. The same kind of thing happened when Mickey Rooney was on board with a U.S.O. group. He said 'Let's get out there and fight!' Well, they almost killed him." (13)

"Well, when I finally got home it was very near the end of the war. The first time I came home I was sitting on the front porch when we got the word that the war was over. Amityville had a big celebration. I didn't see much of it. I was unable to attend. There was a tremendous feeling of relief." (14)



U.S. Marines begin to attack Iwo Jima in February, 1945

Of course, this report can only give the reader a small insight into some of the experiences of those who served during the war. There are so many more stories thay can tell us, that no real conclusions can be drawn from our brief look at the subject. However, it does serve to question the over-simplified images some may have of the American defenses during World War II. It was not fought by one force, but by many individuals who had their own experiences, and ideas about the war. Their different backgrounds and their separate experiences make them too unique to be placed under one title or category. We'd like to thank these veterans who helped give a younger generation a better knowledge of what they went through when they served their country during the Second World War.

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2. Ibid. pp. 122
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4. Donald Burns Interview, October - December, 1984
5. Louis Valenti Interview, October - December, 1984
6. William Kretz Interview, October - December, 1984
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EXPERIENCES OF WORLD WAR II VETERANS LIVING IN AMITYVILLE

Noelle Valente

The Second World War - 1939 to 1945 - was a bitter, horrible struggle. Not only were millions of lives uprooted, extinguished, interrupted and forever different, but those who fought in the War came back with memories that will always remain indelibly impressed on their minds.

The United States at the height of the War had some 5 million in uniform and for those who left, especially in the early years, there were definite uncertainties about ever returning or seeing their families and friends again. Unfortunately, many did not return, but those that did are now grandfathers or well on in years.

This report is based on several interviews with those veterans who were willing to talk about their experiences. Despite the 40 years that have passed, many of those contacted were not anxious to relive old memories. The scars run deep and the psychological effects of the War, or for that matter any war, have been documented before. Behind the reports and statistics, however, those that did respond to my interviews provided me with personal insights that are difficult to ignore. Only the men who were there, living through every battle, fighting the tenseness and even boredom, and the loss of little things, can truly understand and appreciate what General Grant said about our own Civil War, "War is Hell."

THE MEN FROM AMITYVILLE

The men from the small village of Amityville, a picturesque close community on the south shore of Long Island, who served their country, were no different really from men anywhere else. No one wanted to go to war, but few questioned the necessity of it. During my talks with some veterans, I gathered that the overall feeling was one of going out there and getting it over with. No doubt, some had romantic ideas about war, heroic visions of fighting against the big, bad enemy. But any idealistic views entertained by a soldier were quickly shot down by the reality of the horrors of war. For those who had never fought before - the vast majority of America's young men - war was like a sharp slap in the face. The glamor evaporated when you found yourself fighting for your life.

World War II is said to officially have begun when Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939. The tensions, however, were very apparent in Europe before that time and even in the United States, the emotions of isolationism ran head on with those who wanted to help our Allies. According to some thoughts expressed by those interviewed, it was like waiting for the other shoe to drop.

There was little doubt that public opinion was strongly with our keeping out of the War at first, but gradually as the tales and reports came out of Europe and then the finishing touch of the German invasion of Poland took hold, the mood changed. Hitler's ideas of producing the "master race" found some support among conservative radicals, but in Amityville, at any rate, the idea was thought of as nonsense.

The massive retaliation against the cities of England as reported in the press added fuel to the fire and there was an enormous buildup of

"wanting to do something" that came to a boil when the Japanese - allies of Germany - destroyed our Navy at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941...a day, in the words of President Roosevelt, "of infamy, that will live forever."

All across the country millions of Americans were glued to their radio stations as the voice of the President was heard announcing that a state of war existed between this country and the Japanese, which was extended to the Germans. My father, although a youngster at the time, has a vivid memory of the radio broadcast and the impact on the listeners. It was as if a great weight were being taken and added to everyone's shoulders at the same time. The surge of patriotism was everywhere.

From speaking with the veterans now living in Amityville, it was apparent most young men from this village volunteered, rather than wait for the draft. This seemed to me to be quite admirable, but I was told that this reaction was the norm, not the exception. As Doctor Stanley Rau put it..."I volunteered; most people did, it was kind of inevitable. No one was happy about it, but there was nothing you could do except sit back and make the best of it. We realized that I'd have to serve, whether I went in and offered to or not."

Another veteran, Mr. Eugene McElroy, said the same thing but with different motivation..."I volunteered for duty, like many young men of that time. I was just dying to get out and fight for my country. We were a bunch of eager young schoolboys, with no real conception of war, just extreme patriotism."

Once committed to actually fighting, the reality of war soon took over and replaced the youthful eagerness with a resigned sense of trying to survive.

Conditions were uncomfortable in most parts of the War zones, as one would expect. During field campaigns there might be tents to sleep in or you would have to find what you could for protection. For those with tents, according to Mr. McElroy, "...conditions were as good as possible under those circumstances. We slept in tents for the most part, which always sounds bad, but it wasn't so terrible. It was a long time ago, but when I think about it, I can't really recall being uncomfortable or at least dwelling on it."

Food was another matter. Here's Mr. McElroy again: "The food was typical Army c-rations. They were pretty bad, but no one really had the time or the inclination to worry a great deal about it. You knew that was it, and there was no point in complaining." C-rations were canned provisions that were widely used in the field, not very tasty but in wartime one had to accept the fact that everything you were used to having simply wasn't available. The more inventive soldiers had occasion to vary their diet if they found themselves in areas of natural abundance. As Dr. Rau mentioned, "...when we were low on food, we went hunting a lot. There were plenty of wild boar to catch, and they were quite tasty. Then there were fruits, limes, pineapples, mangos, and coconuts, which were great in salads. The fishing was excellent in some places, also."

If the war had these lighter moments they were very welcome as the pressures of surviving, and the psychological effects of being in strange environments, took a heavy toll. Soldiers had so much to cope with emotionally: the separation from loved ones, perhaps a young wife and

infant children; the knowledge that any minute could be your last; watching as your friends and buddies died around you. "In war, you understand, one's mind undergoes a kind of shock. It's difficult to grasp that you're out there for the sole purpose of killing other human beings and preserving your own life. Much time is spent thinking about it, and yet trying to keep your mind off it because everything is so horrible," said Mr. McElroy.

As a result of the enormity of what was happening around them, soldiers would become almost paranoid about just the simplest things. Mr. Loderhose told me, "Sometimes, the lack of insignificant things bothered me the most. Once, I needed a nail clipper very badly. There was so little hope of my getting one, that I dwelled on it and it bothered me no end. Meanwhile, troops were starving and I was concerned because I couldn't cut my nails."

The preoccupation with simple needs was there, yet at other moments, it was enough just to get through the day without complete boredom. Boredom was a frequent complaint that I heard over and over again, during my interviews. Long stretches of time when there was absolutely nothing to do. It was hard to devise pastimes out in the middle of nowhere, especially with the knowledge that letting your guard down could be fatal. Although it is difficult envisioning being bored in such surroundings, war isn't always as exciting as it might seem from popular depictions in movies and novels. "At least I can say I wasn't scared." stated Dr. Rau. "Just bored, extremely bored. You know, in war, a great deal of time is spent waiting and waiting and waiting. It's very frustrating."

Despite boredom, bad food, uncomfortable accommodations, loneliness, and separation from loved ones, there were other moments when it seemed the more sensitive observer in a soldier could make its way to the surface, actually putting the war on hold while one looked at the surroundings. "We were moved to Brisbane, Australia, inside the Great Barrier Reef. That was beautiful. Oh, the sights were breathtaking," remembered Dr. Rau. These moments were short and for many soldiers quite uncommon as the only scenes frequently encountered were destroyed vegetation, burning fields and blackened earth from repeated bombings.

For Dr. Rau, however, the view of war was colored because he was a medic. His view was so well told in the popular TV series about another war, but still quite compelling: namely M.A.S.H. Dr. Rau's remembrances have a familiar ring. "I was a surgeon...so I wasn't really out there fighting. But we were always very close to the battle lines, about three or four miles behind them. I heard battles constantly...We were set up in a tent hospital, which had about 25 doctors and 42 nurses. Altogether we must have handled somewhere between 400 and 700 patients a day. We had a 98% recovery rate, I'm proud to say, but some of the cases we handled were really severe. I witnessed some really terrible wounded men and it was hard."

Whether doctor or foot soldier the hardest aspect of the War seemed to be the separation from loved ones, particularly one's family. Even single soldiers were caught up in the stress the married men felt. "Well, of course, my wife was really upset, but she put up with it very well, as we all had to. There was just nothing else one could do. And everyone was pretty much in the same boat, you know! It was something you had to do and you knew there was no getting out of it so you simply accepted it. It was hard leaving them, but I wasn't scared," said Dr. Rau. Mr. McElroy had a

a different point of view. "I was still single, thank God. A lot of the men in my group were married, some with children. Boy, it must've been hard to leave, not knowing what the future had in store for you, whether you'd ever see them again. They used to talk about their families and write at least once a day. To tell you the truth, I was glad not to have to worry about a wife."

THE MEN FROM AMITYVILLE COME HOME

Finally the war was over and those lucky enough to survive returned to pick up the threads of their lives. Mr. McElroy said it very well. "It was January of 1946 when I finally came home. At first, you know, everything seems totally different, because you've been away so long. It's difficult to get yourself back into the habit of living a normal life, hard to release the feelings of defending your life every day. But eventually, a pattern forms and the war fades very slowly. It definitely leaves its marks, but it is possible to put all that behind you. That's what I've always tried to do anyway."

Dr. Rau also said: "I came home relieved, extremely relieved. My children didn't remember me too well. They had to get to know me all over again, as I had to do with them, too. It was strange to be home again; it took a great deal of getting used to."

EPILOGUE

World War II was also the beginning of the end to what most experts consider the traditionally fought war. As T. Grady Gallant points out in his book, On Valor's Side, "...a war that was the last of its kind - for science has remade war into another and more terrible image." (1) The frightening aspect of atomic weaponry is scary and difficult to comprehend in its enormity of possible destruction, perhaps even the end of our planet. But whatever the circumstances of armed conflict, the result in human terms can never be fully measured or even understood. If it were possible to fully absorb the impact of war on those who must fight, then this world would unite to ban all wars. Pope Paul VI said in an address before the United Nations, "War, nevermore." His thoughts are echoed in the final words of one of the citizens of little Amityville, Mr. McElroy: "The war left scars on me that will never fade. I've wiped away a lot of the unplesantness, but still, there are some things that never leave you. There'll always be some things that I'll never talk about."

FOOTNOTES

1. On Valor's Side, T. Grady Gallant, Doubleday and Company, Inc. c.1963 page vii

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2. Interview with Mr. Eugene McElroy, March - April, 1985
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WHAT DID THEY DO?
Women in Amityville During WW II

Sheila Daley and Ellen Sckalor

After we entered World War II in 1941, there was a call for volunteers to help support our boys. Women all over the country heeded and answered this call.

Even before the U.S. officially entered the war, 2,600 women completed defense training courses given by the Suffolk County Defense Council. (1) Some of the courses were in first aid, home nursing, canteen preparations, air raid precautions, and motor corps driving. After we officially entered, again such courses were offered, and there were additions. One such course was on the art of bomb handling.

After we entered the war, the Civil Defense established many different groups to help aid in defense. These groups, run by women, included womens' clubs, the Red Cross Centers, and many Canteen Centers. There was a call for air raid wardens. Women and men alike volunteered to watch the skies, from tops of churches and schools in the area, for enemy planes. (As Mrs. Cecil Ruggles told us, it was not an exciting job.) A motor corps was set up also. These were drivers who transported materials and were prepared to transport wounded in case of emergency.

Canteens, established by the Civil Defense Council, were established to prepare food in case of emergency. Shortly after our entry into World War II, they were set up in the village, North Amityville, and on the south side of Merrick Road. In order to work in a Canteen, women were required to take a 20 hour course in nutrition. (These, too, were rumored to be boring.) (2)

The Red Cross in Amityville was an active force in helping the war effort. They offered the community aid in communications, home service, civil relief, public health nursing, first aid, and water safety. (3) Throughout the war, they held blood drives. (4) They also established the Junior Red Cross for the younger members of the community.

Also established in the Amityville area in support of the war was a chapter of the American Women's Volunteer Services (A.W.V.S.). Their motto was "unite and serve". These women were volunteers who aided the Civil Defense, the men and women who entered the service, helped with rationing, aided with the enforcement of dim out rules (these were rules pertaining to the dimming out of lights at night to make the town less visible to possible enemy aircraft), and entertain the soldiers abroad. (5)

Age was not a factor that held women back from helping the war effort in Amityville. The Girl Scouts in the area collected tin foil for the military, and collected material for bandages which they would prepare for use in case of an emergency. (6)

Many of the womens' social clubs in Amityville helped support the war cause. Representatives from some of the womens' clubs, such as the Junior League, organized training courses in first aid in conjunction with the defense leagues in the area. Also, many womens' clubs purchased war bonds. (7) In a joint effort of all the clubs, among them the A.W.V.S., the Women's Club, the Red Cross, and many church organizations, a booth was set

up in front of the First National Bank (now the Lauder Museum) which sold both war bonds and stamps. (8)

All the women in the community contributed to the war effort. Rationing was one unified effort. To give the men overseas the best, food for civilian use was rationed. Everyone was issued ration books for meat, coffee, sugar, and other in-demand items. Women were asked to donate their tin cans and nylon stockings for military use. Later in the war, gas was also rationed and bans were placed on pleasure outings. (9) This act of rationing was strictly enforced to the point that if a person used all of his ration for a week, he had to wait until the next week to get any more gas.

WOMEN IN UNIFORM

Women had, in times of previous wars, volunteered their services to the military, usually to serve as nurses or seamstresses. Patriotism was their motivation. The same thing happened in this war, but this war was different. We were fighting a war on two fronts, and there was an intensified need for manpower for active military duty. To compensate for this shift within the military, women established a permanent, regular status. Women soon took over almost every military activity short of combat duty.

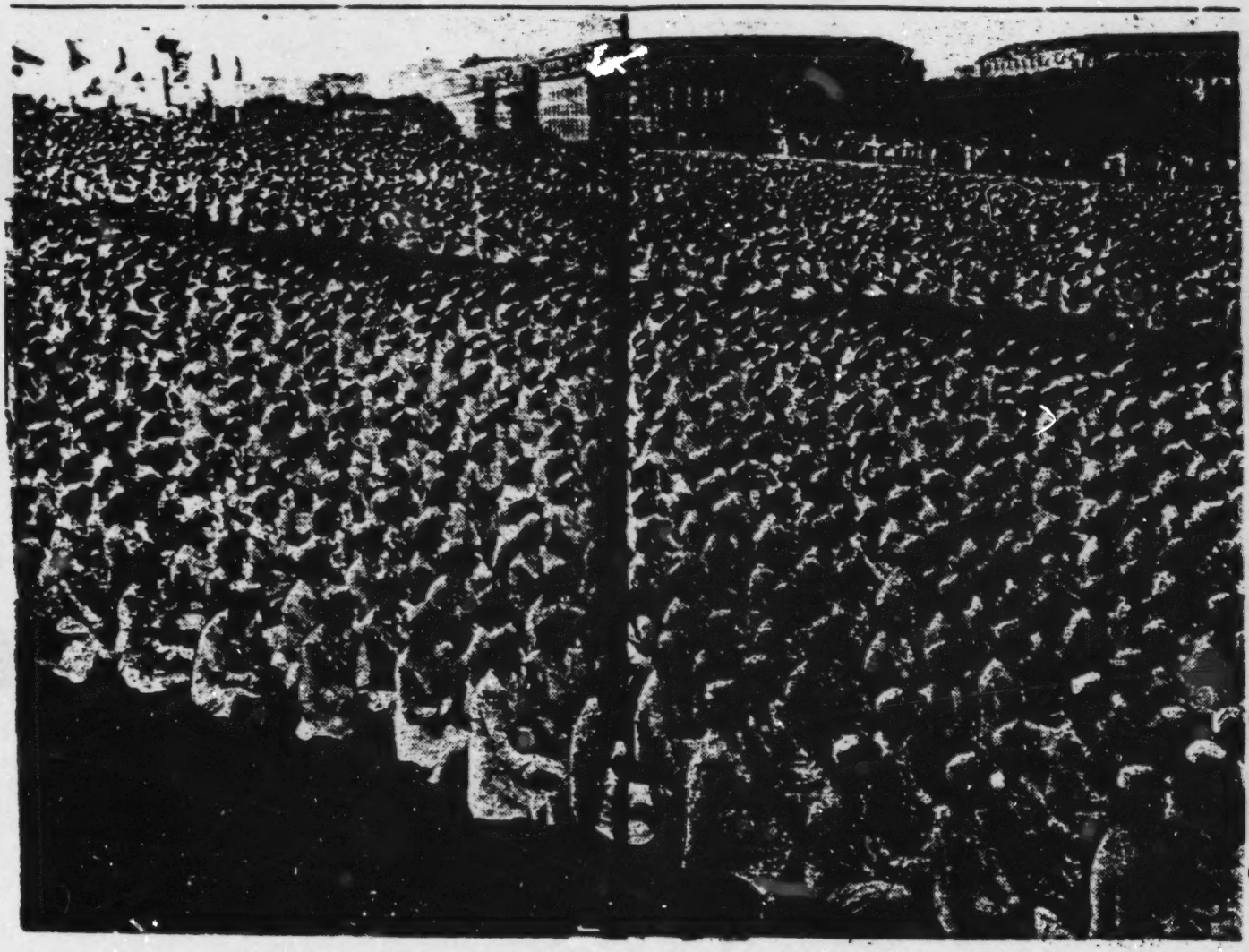
Usually those women who chose to enlist were single and in their late teens or early twenties, although some were married. In total, close to 350,000 women enlisted in the military to help fight the war. Of that number, 140,000 joined the Women's Army Corps (WACS), 100.000 joined the Navy's WAVES, 23,000 went to the Marine Corps Women's Reserve (MCWR), and 13,000 went into the Coast Guard as SPARS. In addition, 60,000 women were part of the Army Nurse Corps and 14,000 were part of the Navy Nurse Corps. (10)

Mrs. Betty Decker, a long time resident of Amityville, was one of the many women who joined the military. She chose to become part of the WAVES. Before the war, Mrs. Decker was a secretary at a firm in New York City. We spoke to Mrs. Decker about her experiences as a WAVE.

US: What was a WAVE?
B.D. It was a part of the Navy. It stands for Womens Auxiliary Volunteer Emergency Services.

US: How long were you a WAVE?
B.D. 3 years. From 1942 until 1945. I received my basic training at Hunter College. Then, I went on to Yeoman's School in Stillwater, Oklahoma for 3 months. It was based on the campus of Oklahoma A & M. After that I was transferred to Washington D.C. where I served in communications. The Navy converted an old girls school into barracks for 400 women.

US: What rank did you hold? What were some of the duties you had?
B.D. Yeoman, specialist Q, 2nd Class. The Q stands for communications. Why, I don't know. Basically, I had clerical duties. I filled out forms (a.k.a. red tape) according to naval procedures. The work was boring. We sat in a room and received those messages coded in groups of five numbers.



"10,000 WAVES mark Second Anniversary in celebration in Washington, D.C."
7/31/44

This picture from Evening Star, shows 10,000 WAVES at their 2nd Anniversary celebration. Undaunted by rain, these women listened to a congratulatory message by Admiral Chester W. Nemitz, commander of the Pacific fleet. In it, he said, "Although history records that women have had an influence upon navies, it is only recently that women have had an influence within navies... In many naval activities maintained by the Pacific Fleet along the West Coast, WAVES are busily doing jobs which help substantially in the war against Japan. To them will be a part of the credit for eventual victory."

We just put them into a book. Then it went to another group of girls. We never saw any of the messages. It was just like playing with numbers, but we were paid well and fed well.

US: Did your family support you?
B.D. Yes, my family supported my decision.

US: How did other people feel?
B.D. Usually, we were backed whole-heartedly in our respective communities. Sometimes women felt the military was too regimented for them, but they liked the idea of being in the military. Some people said that we were only doing it to find a man.

Later in the interview, Mrs. Decker's husband, Ed, joined us. He too was involved in World War II. He was a member of the Coast Guard and travelled to ports in Europe during the war.

US: How did men feel about the women in the military?
N.D. A lot of men resented the women. Women took safe desk jobs in the states, so that meant that men had to go overseas and into combat. Many women were considered to be sluts (sic). But, I found them to be lovely girls.

Due to the amount of men needed to fight the war, a labor shortage resulted at a time when it was most critical for this country to have all the manpower it could muster. Without the men to operate the machines in the factories in any industry, our war effort might suffer.

To compensate for this shortage, there was a nationwide campaign to attract workers. These campaigns were essentially aimed at women because they were in abundance. Glamour, economic merits, and, most of all, patriotism were used to appeal to the female population, and women responded. By 1942, of the thirteen million people working, at least half were women. (11)

However, women were not always welcomed with open arms. A great many employers were hesitant to hire the supposedly "weaker sex". They were afraid that women would be too emotional. Older men in the factories resented them because they took from them their less strenuous positions which they had achieved through years of service. Some of the men merely resented the fact that they were women.

But "Rosie the Rivetor" proved she could do it. She filled a variety of positions ranging from press, crane, or tractor operator to factory manager. Rosie, too, lived in Amityville.

There were two principle airplane plants in the Amityville area during World War II, Fairchild-Republic and Grumman Aircraft (now Grumman Aerospace). It has been remarked that during World War II, Amityville and the surrounding area grew because of these plants, and after the war, stayed on and helped further the growth of the community.

Both Fairchild and Grumman offered incentives to attract women to their work force. At Fairchild, the Ranger division offered interested

women engineering courses, tuition free, at Adelphi University. These were to help equip women for technical work within the plant. Grumman offered to either subsidize day care, or establish their own day care centers for working mothers. (13)

All of this time and effort put in by the women of Amityville, and of the rest of the country aided in the advancement of women's equality. After the war most working women quit their jobs and began raising families. Still, some women continued to work outside of the home, and it soon became a common practice. Women also gained the opportunity to enter into military service in peace time. And, most of all, women gained independence and a sense of self-worth and self-respect. To their male counterparts, they proved that they were more than capable of fending for themselves, and women gained the deserved respect that had been long overdue.

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THE BLACK COMMUNITY DURING WORLD WAR II

Janet Benson and Kim Davis

On December 8, 1941, Congress declared war on Japan. The Axis powers, honoring their treaty obligations to Japan, declared war on the United States three days later. America, whether willingly or not, was now totally engaged in the "great world conflict."

Those enlisted, as well as those drafted, were sent overseas to fight for and to protect America. Having to feed, clothe, house, and supply with equipment the men and women in the armed services, including those in allied uniforms, placed tremendous pressure on the American economy. Amityville, during this time, was still trying to beat the Depression. The short term effect of the Second World War only added more strain.

Food was hard to get, but if you were black and poor it was even harder. The black community of Amityville already knew what it was like to be poor, and tried to do the best they could with the food and clothing that was available to them. To sit and grieve over what was not available would have been to no avail.

If asked what it was really like during World War II, any black that was alive and can recall could talk for hours. No one can tell you what it was like more accurately than someone who was actually there. Not everyone likes to talk about the times when they had to struggle, but Mrs. Audrey Fowler of 38 Smith Street, Amityville, was very pleased that someone was interested in her opinions, recollections, and experiences of the war. She represents a part of the Amityville community that experienced turmoil and heartaches since arriving: the black community in Amityville.

Audrey Fowler was born and raised in Westbury, Long Island. Born as Audrey L. Hill, she married Philip C. Fowler on August the twenty first, nineteen hundred and twenty six, which makes a happy marriage of fifty eight years. The couple have been living at the same address for forty three years. Born and raised in Amityville, Philip's ancestors were decendents of the Shinnecock Indians. The Fowlers reared four children. They produced six, but two died at birth. There are three males and one female. Their names are Kevin, Edward, Philip Jr., and Beverly.

Mrs. Fowler is a very proud mother and wife, and with good reason. Her husband and all three sons fought in wars for the United States. They all came back safely.

During the war Mrs. Fowler worked for the Navy at Grumman Air Craft. She took care of the Navy personnel. As the overseer, she had a big job. She worked there for twenty five years. Being the only black in her department, one would expect her to see a lot of racial prejudice and discrimination. On the contrary, Mrs. Fowler said "there was not a lot of discrimination. I heard talk, but I never saw any, and I was all around." (1)

Mrs. Fowler won two badges which she said "were hard to attain, you had to be good to receive these badges." (2) After having put in more than her share of service, she retired at the end of the war.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mr. & Mrs. Philip C. Fowler on their wedding day, March 21, 1926.

Mrs. Fowler, no matter how much work it took, made sure that her children were as healthy as possible. At one point, her daughter Beverly "had to eat corn meal and drink evaporated milk". (3) She always wrote to her husband, who went off to war, and kept in contact, because, although he couldn't always write back, he always had something to look forward to. She even sent pictures.

When asked how she felt about her husband fighting, she answered: "it was hard to deal with, but all I could do was pray and ask God to watch over him:. (4) Mrs. Fowler never let go of the faith she had in God. She used to run for blocks to a church to pray when she was at work. She had to accept the fact that he had to fight and there was nothing she could do but be supportive. She sent him food, money, and wrote letters as much as possible. She is ever grateful to God for having sent her husband home without a scratch.

When asked if she thought the war really brought America out of the Depression, she replied: "yes, definitely, there were times when you could get food and there were times when you couldn't, but this was not only food, but other necessities also." (5) She had to cultivate her own garden, as many other Amityville residents did to help ease the burden of not having enough money to buy food. She said "we stuck together and did the best we could. We never gave up our faith." (6) Since there was not that much prejudice within the community, that was one less problem they had to worry about. She said that they would listen to the radio every day at work to see if there was any progress in ending the war. When asked if she was really glad when the war was over, she replied, "I was really happy and I knew that God had been on our side". (7)

To every coin there is another side. Thomas Greene of 147 Steele Place, Amityville fought in the war. Mr. Greene went all the way through Amityville schools and at twenty-one was drafted, but didn't mind. Before entering the war he was married to Mary, but about three months after war broke out she was killed in an accident. He later married his present wife Rita. Born and raised in Amityville, Mr. Greene, for the last fifteen years, has been living on the same street. With one daughter, Carolyn, Mr. Greene didn't mind at all talking about the war.

Prior to going to war, Mr. Greene was a trackman on the Long Island Railroad. He saw that they were not going to promote him, so when he returned after the war he would not accept the job back.

When asked if the war actually got them out of the Depression he replied that it was still difficult after the war, but it was a little better, whereas Mrs. Fowler said it definitely did. This difference of opinion was formed because Mr. Greene was away and didn't have to look for food. He may not have been able to eat whenever he wanted, but he didn't have to look for his food and worry about where it was going to come from next.

Mr. Greene was a medic with a black group of medics that serviced troops. When asked if there was prejudice in the military, Mr. Greene replied, "yes, but I didn't realize to what extent until I went over seas. Fighting opened my eyes to discrimination. It exposed me to the different policies." (8)

Mr. Greene said that the black community was closer during the World War II era "because we had less and stuck together." (9)

Even he had to admit that the war did have some benefits. The GI Bill gave veterans educational rights, homes and many benefits that really helped the blacks.

Before the war, Mr. Greene had tried to get a loan but was refused. After the war, through the GI Bill, he was able to receive a loan. He believes, rightly, that "man should become intelligent enough to solve problems without fighting." (10)

World War II ended in 1945. For some families it was a time of joy, but for some a time of sorrow. There were blacks that did not make it back to Amityville, but memories of them will be ones of joy. They fought for what Amityville is today.

FOOTNOTES

1. Taken from an interview with Mrs. Audrey Fowler, April, 1985
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
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8. Taken from an interview with Mr. Thomas Greene, April 1985
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AMITYVILLE BUSINESS DURING WORLD WAR II

Steven Bogan

The Amityville business district has changed little in the past forty years. It was during World War II what it is now: a collection of banks and family businesses that seem to pop up only in small-town America. And Amityville businesses, like other small businesses across the country, were hurt by World War II.

Banking was one of the few areas that thrived during the war. The First National Bank and the Bank of Amityville were making huge profits not only from the sale of war bonds but also from loans and investments with the federal and state governments. Most of these transactions involved two local aircraft companies, Fairchild-Republic in Farmingdale and Grumman in Bethpage, that employed many people who lived in Amityville.

Businesses that did not have government contracts were not as fortunate. The war and the war-time economy brought America back to a state of conservatism. After finally becoming free of the Great Depression, the war continued the people's reluctance to spend. Part of this was because of government sanctions, but the popular attitude was to deny luxuries so that the materials used to make them could instead be used in the war effort. For example, new cars were not being built because the metal was needed for tanks, planes, ships, and other war goods.

Car salesmen and other automobile-related businesses were hurt the most. New cars were not being produced, many old cars were being taken for scrap metal, tires were not being sold because of shortages of rubber, and

First National Bank is on far left. Phannemiller's Drug Store is still in business.

Corner of Ireland Place and Park Avenue.

McClellen's, far left, is still in business on Broadway.

gas was being rationed in order to reduce consumption. People stopped pleasure driving because they were only rationed enough gas to get to work. Things got so bad at one point that in mid-June 1942, there was no gas to be bought in Amityville. People were not buying used cars, but were making the old one last a few more years. The automobile-related businesses were looking at hard times. Many barely survived and some even closed their doors. Mole Ford, which was located at the corner of Merrick Road and Richmond Avenue, rented their grounds to Grumman Aircraft Corporation, who produced parts for their planes at this site.

Food merchants also ran into trouble. Sales were down because of the rationing of sugar and the high prices for meat, grain, butter, and other foods. Consumers were not only buying less food but also less expensive types of food, which reduced profits for retailers. The supermarkets in Amityville, such as Bohack and A & P, were losing money because of slow sales and the shortage of stock.

Most other businesses were not affected in any way other than the general decline of business activity. The declines, in most cases, were only a small percentage of their normal business. A few lost money and were forced to go bankrupt. But small businesses always come and go. Some of the many that are still around today are Fischer's Candy Store, The Amityville Men's Shop, Phannemiller's Drug Store, McClellen's 5 & 10 Store, and Powell Funeral Home.

The conservative attitude that swept across the country did not escape Amityville. Movement of cash slackened because people were buying less. The businesses in fields where goods were rationed saw harder times than others. However, when the war ended, people began to spend and the local economy picked up. Businesses that had been hurt by World War II seemed to be the quickest to recover. For example, the many car dealers, such as Mole Ford, Bayview Motor Sales, Brooks Motor Sales, and Amity Auto Sales, saw great gains in the post-war period. Life returned to normal.*

* Thanks to the Amityville Historical Society for their information and pictures. Also thanks to the Amityville Record, the source of much of my research.

THE ROLE OF CHURCHES IN AMITYVILLE DURING WORLD WAR II

Mary Mahepath and Melissa Freedman

The churches discussed in this article are as follows:

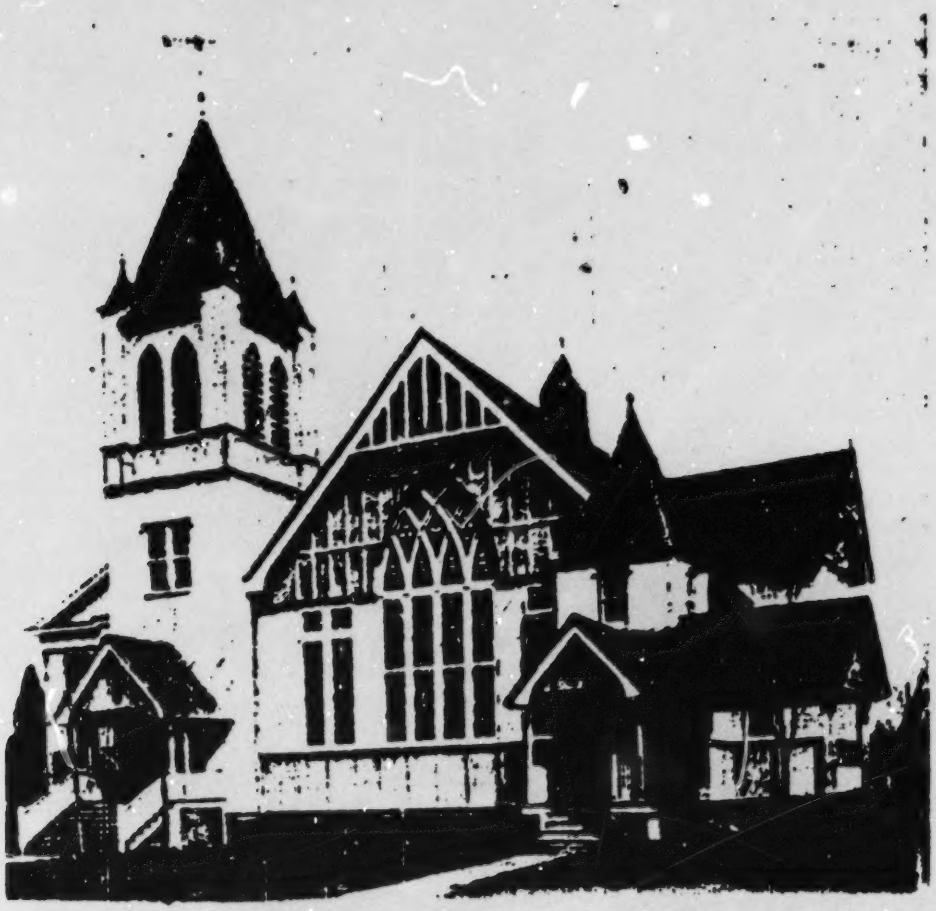
1. First United Methodist Church
2. St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church
3. St. Mary's Episcopal Church
4. St. Paul's Lutheran Church

The churches in Amityville have always provided a strong backbone for their community. During World War II they continued to do so, giving hope and support in a wide variety of ways. They were a source of strength and leadership at a time when our nation was facing a great crisis. In addition to offering regular services the churches expanded themselves to meet the needs of the community. During such a critical period the churches remained in close contact. They had special masses and offered moral support. They combined forces and organized many community activities. They offered space to the Red Cross and other war support groups. Their main concern was to accomodate the community. They banded behind the community and supported the boys at war in any way they could. They helped to maintain a feeling of safety and security in Amityville at an uncertain time in our history.

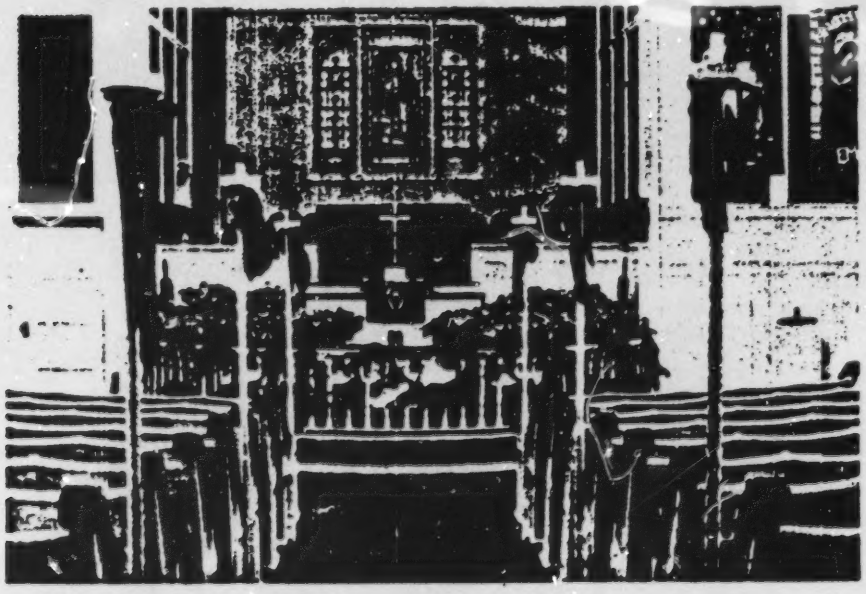
The four churches researched, St. Martin of Tours, St. Paul's, St. Mary's and The First Methodist Church joined together and sponsored many war related activities. The churches cooperated with the Red Cross in two programs, Women's Knitting and a Nutrition Program. The Women's Knitting groups met at the various churches and knitted items such as scarves and socks for the enlisted men. The Nutrition and Canteen class was held at the First Methodist Church but was attended by women volunteers from all the area churches. Its purpose was to give valuable information about nutrition and menu planning. This information was vital at a time when many needed goods were being rationed. The program also taught the women how to run a canteen in case of emergency. The Amityville Record cooperated with the churches on these programs by publishing the times, date and location.

The churches cooperatively formed an Airplane Spotters Program and organized air raid drills. The airplane spotters would sit in a lookout and watch for approaching enemy planes. The lookout was atop Park South Elementary School, which at the time served as Amityville High School. The lookout was occupied 24 hours a day. Select members of each church served as air-raid wardens and they effectively planned successful air raid drills. In addition, all churches served as air raid shelters.

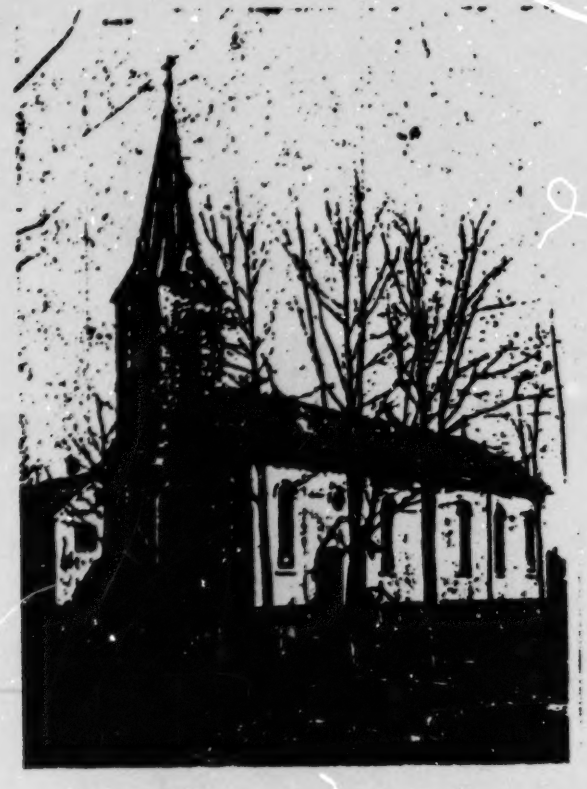
Each of the churches also worked individually to meet the needs of their congregations. St. Paul's church, located on Park Avenue, was headed by Pastor Bohn. (5) Each member of the church who entered the service was presented with a bible. The presentation was made at a private ceremony attended by members of the clergy and family members. St. Paul's also kept in touch with its servicemen by mailing the church newspaper to them. Pastor Bohn himself kept in touch with many of his displaced parishoners by writing and receiving letters. The church also sent members to visit the Protestant soldiers at the base in South Farmingdale. These visits were



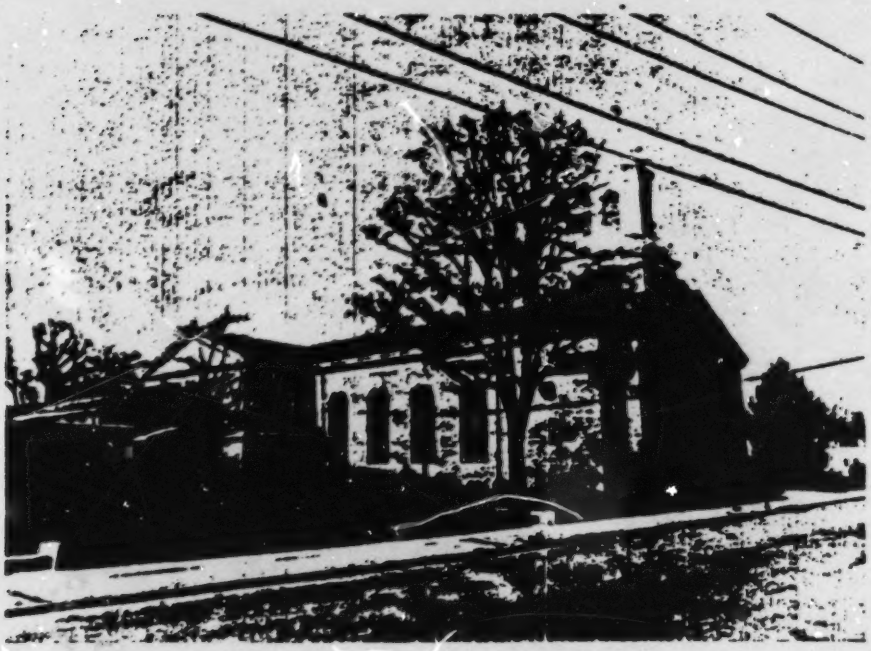
First United Methodist Church: Amityville's Oldest Church



Interior First United Methodist Church: Christmas 1979



St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church in 1899



The new St. Martin's

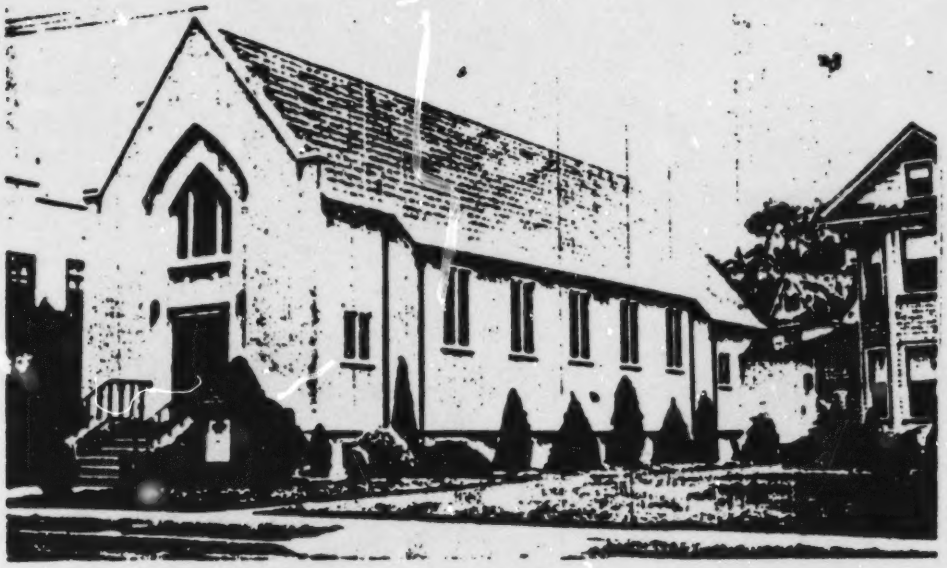
uplifting to both the soldiers and the parishoners. The enlisted men of St. Paul's were remembered in regular masses and special prayer services. Their names were also placed on an honor roll on the front lawn of the church as a sign that they were not forgotten.

St. Martin of Tours church on Union Avenue put a strong emphasis on keeping the morale high on the home front. Walter Saxon, a member of the church expressed the churches function most directly when he stated, "we all tightened our belts and cut down on fuel consumption. Each church in Amityville put their creeds aside and began working with one another in aiding the community." (3) The pastor, Father McGlade, and the church itself, were concerned with keeping up a good front at home. Father McGlade organized a crusade to encourage the young women of the community to send letters and packages to the boys abroad as a way of uplifting their spirits. Many priests and laypeople also volunteered to coach various teams such as little league. They filled in the vacancies caused by the young men away at war. Father McGlade also escorted many young girls to the movies and other social gatherings since their boyfriends were at war. St. Martin of Tours arranged for the business community to close for three hours on Good Friday as a tribute to all who served in the armed forces. The church held weekly prayer services for those in the service in addition to regular masses. Also, like St. Paul's, a list of the parish members who were involved in the war was displayed on the front lawn. The parishoners tried to keep the spirit up at home so that a positive feeling could be expressed in the letters to the boys at war. (2)

St. Mary's Church on Broadway was led by Father Bayard Goodwin. The church made special efforts to honor the men at war. The 77 men from St. Mary's were remembered every day in a special mass offered by Father Goodwin. A shrine was installed as a special remembrance to the men in the service. The remembrance known as the Votive Shrine was placed at the head of the south aisle of the church and anybody was welcome to come pray by it. A member of the church, Joseph Wrench donated a scroll with the names of the 77 men in service inscribed on it. The scroll was hung over the Votive Shrine. After the war the shrine was converted to a Peace Shrine as a monument to the men who had fought in the war. (1)

St. Mary's remembered her 77 men away at war in special religious ceremonies, such as the Nationwide Corporate Communion of the Episcopal Church. In this ceremony 77 men and boys from St. Mary's stood in and accepted communion for the men away at war. The younger members of the church also made contributions to the war effort. They raised money and donated it to the Red Cross to be used for the care and comfort of prisoners of the war. Father Goodwin also made a valiant effort to cut down on the church's fuel consumption. He built a special chapel under the church rectory, St. Michael of All Angels. This chapel was used instead of the upstairs chapel for many occasions because it was smaller and used less heat and electricity. (4)

The First Methodist Church on Broadway was directly affected by the war. The Reverend Marion J. Creeger left the church on September 15, 1942, to become Associate Program Director of the Army and Navy Department of the YMCA. His new responsibilities included special responsibilities of religious emphasis and church relations in the YMCA - USO. Reverend Creeger was replaced by the Reverend Carl A. Bergsten on October 1, 1942. The church carried on many of the same programs as the other churches previously mentioned. There was a conscientious effort to meet the needs on the

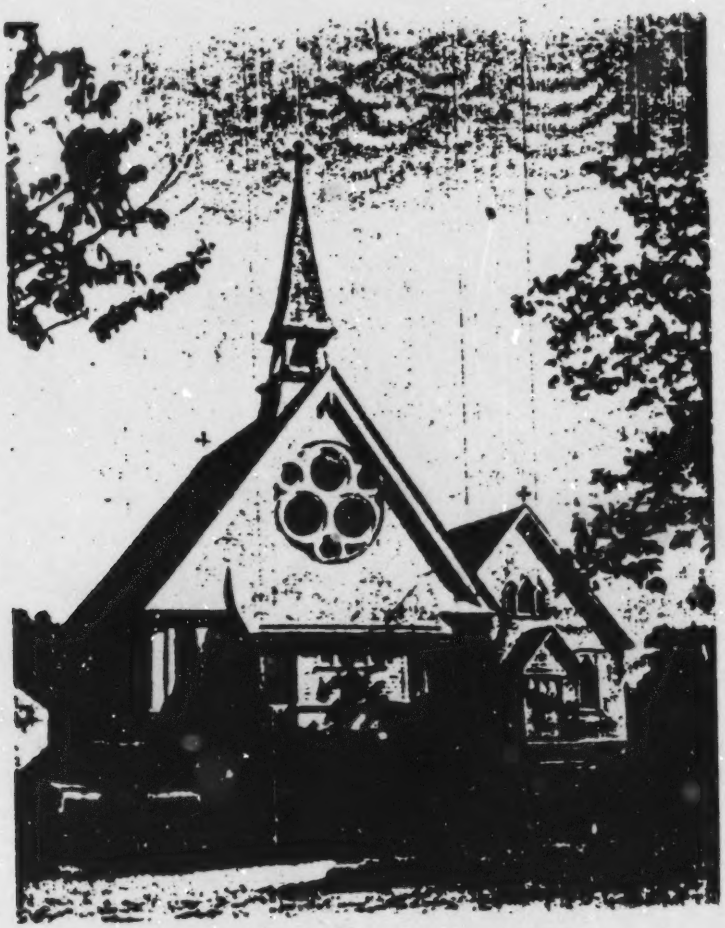


St. Paul's Lutheran Church in 1947

St. Paul's Church showing changes made in 1949

home front. There were special weekly services to honor the people in the service and parishoners were encouraged to write to the men overseas. The First Methodist Church made a noble effort to cut down on fuel consumption when the heating boilers were converted to fuel. The church also participated in the Red Cross Blood Bank. It was frequently a site where the people of Amityville could donate blood. Special presentations were offered by the Fellowship Club to keep the public informed of events in Europe and the Pacific. An example of this was a presentation "From Chartres to Aachen on the Road to Berlin". It included personal observations of a visiting minister and a motion picture of the present continental battle front. Amid the national crisis of war the church membership increased with 104 new members and in 1944 celebrated its centennial.

The churches of Amityville provided a great deal of support for the community during a time of hardship and struggle. They provided a haven for many people who were looking for an answer to world problems. They utilized all possible means to ease the burdens of their community at a difficult time. They helped provide the community with a sense of security at a time when people truly doubted their safety and well being. The Churches of Amityville truly served the community in every possible way in an extremely critical period. (6)



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

ENDNOTES

1. Reverend Bayard H. Goodwin, talking about church patronage.
2. Information on St. Martin of Tours, courtesy of Father McGlade.
3. Information on St. Martin of Tours, courtesy of Walter Saxon.
4. Information on St. Mary's, courtesy of church representative.
5. Information on St. Paul's, courtesy of church representative.
6. Information on all four churches researched courtesy of Amityville Historical Society.

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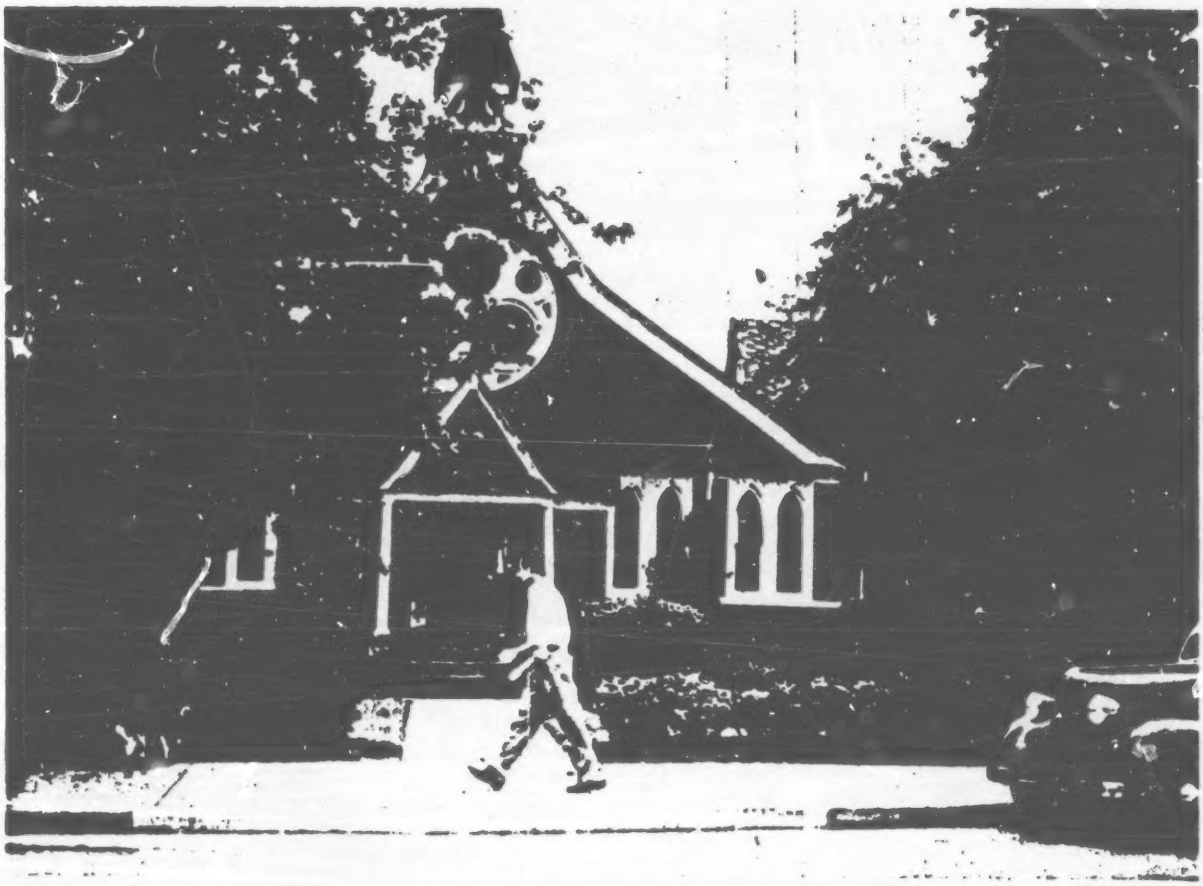
2. William T. Lauder, A Brief History of Amityville, Amityville, N.Y. 1973, p.3.



St. Mary's in 1946

51.

WORLD WAR II AND ITS EFFECT UPON AMITYVILLE'S SCHOOL DISTRICT, (1941-1945)

Information Received From the Lauder Museum

Pamela Hudson

World War II, like its forerunner, had a devastating effect on all nations. No matter how big or small, no country, city or state could hide from its rage, and Amityville was no exception.

All parts of Amityville's society were under the "war alert" code. Danger signals were developed, air raid stations established and curfews enforced. Yet, Amityville's school district continued to teach its students in hopes that soon the War would come to an end.

One effect that the war had on Amityville's schools was the element of the unknown. Because air raid drills had become a part of their lives, the unexpected, screaming sirens had to be included in the student's curriculum. Mr. Seth Purdy of Amityville's Historical Society recalls his school days during World War II. "The very first drill was very disorderly. The teachers feared that they were going to be bombed and the kids had no idea what was going on. (The administration) felt that it was wiser to disperse the students than to keep them all in school. We were all sent home but some of us lived a mile away from school." Eventually, the students were assigned homes near the school to go to when the drills came. The schools never knew when to expect the alarms but soon became conditioned to screeching bells that put the whole community at "wits' end."

Not only did the air raid drills disrupt the usual teachings of Amityville schools but it also turned its high school (then Park South) into an air raid "alert center." The high school's roof had a sort of "cage" or fencing around it which was occupied by volunteer "detectors." In this instance, too, the students had to become accustomed to "strange men mounting their roof to add to the daily confusion."

As a result of the war, there were no male teachers in the school district. All the former male teachers had enlisted or had been drafted into the War. For male children with women instructing their gym classes, "initial shock and a 'tinge' of embarrassment" was evident. When female teachers escorted smaller male children to the lavatory, some of the students preferred not to go.

During recess, the children had to remain silent as the adults swarmed into Park South to obtain their gas and sugar ration booklets.

The "Great Senior Trip" to Washington, D.C. each year was cancelled during World War II. As a matter of fact all trips were cancelled. All student activities were concentrated into one theme: "Support the American Soldiers." The students were made fully aware of what the United States was involved in.

Besides enduring the hardships of "awaited disaster," many towns and small cities took it upon themselves to aid their American men in battle. Some amassed tremendous amounts of donated blood; others set up twenty-four hour "help lines" for families who had become "father-less," while others

turned their homes and community facilities into information centers for the confused and the uninformed.

Amityville, unfortunately being the small town that it is did not have as many opportunities to demonstrate their concern. Nevertheless, its people pooled their resources and did come up with a few programs to aid their American soldiers.

One major Amityville program during World War II was the "War Savings Bond" plan. Each student, every Monday, was to bring in at least twenty-five cents as a donation. When $18.75 was reached, this student was then allowed to purchase a "war savings bond." The major theme was patriotism. "Support your soldiers." "Do your duty as an American!" It was apparent here that even in a small town, the younger generation had been geared at "whipping those nazis."

The Parents and Teachers Association (P.T.A.) installed Emergency Food Relief Centers for those families that were suffering because the "bread-winner" was at war.

The community also held memorial services weekly to honor their dead. They established funds to be used only for those who were seriously disabled.

Amityville's school district was used as an "all-purpose, community information center." Ration booklets were handed out there. Air raid procedures and updated happenings were secured by Amityvillians through the schools. At times, the school was even used as an immediate shelter when a home was too far to be reached in only a matter of minutes.

Surprisingly, the school, the churches and the community did not crumble under the war. The Glee Club performances still went on. The Charm School was still in session. Heated arguments concerning teaching salaries and benefits continued to rage. Budget hearings, elections and registrations fell right on schedule.

Yet, no Amityvillian who graduated between the years 1941 and 1945 was forgotten. Some left school in their Senior year to fight in the war, others left the day of graduation. Nevertheless Amityville held a special ceremony in their honor to highlight their courage and patriotism. Blood drives were given especially in their names to commemorate "those brave Amityville Soldiers."

Amityville, as a small town, provided its people with support and patriotism. As a small town, major programs were established to support the American soldiers. If one was to read only about the programs developed in Amityville to aid the Americans during the War, one would never guess that Amityville was actually a small, rural town in the midst of a major world war.*

* Interview conducted with Mr. Seth Purdy, March, 1985.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION UPON AMITYVILLE DURING WORLD WAR II

Kevin Feldman and Allan Press

"A VETERAN IS..."
given by J. Spencer Kinard

America's war veterans come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes and ages. Their collective experience spans two world wars and several foreign conflicts. They have followed war mules through the mud of Flanders Field, dropped from landing barges onto the beaches on Normandy, faced the icy cold of Porkchop Hill and trudged the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta.

But, regardless of differences in makeup and experience, all veterans share a common bond - a brotherhood of memory and hard-won wisdom which helps define their character.

A veteran is the first man up as the flag passes by on the 4th of July, and the last one down, for he has been a witness to the blood and tears which make this and all other parades possible.

A veteran is a man of peace, soft spoken, slow to anger, quick to realize that those who talk most about the glory of war are those who know least about its' horror. He never jokes about war; he's been there, and still sees on memory's vivid screen the wounded and the dying, the widows and orphans; he knows first-hand that no war is good and that the only thing worse than war is slavery.

He is friend to all races of man, begrudging none; he carries with him the knowledge that it is not the man who is the enemy but enslavement and false ideologies. Those whom he once faced across the hostile battle lines, he now esteems as his brothers.

A veteran is at once proud and humble: proud of the fact that in 200 years no foreign enemy has set foot on American soil; and humble in the realization that many of his comrades who helped him make this lofty aim a reality, never returned.

More than anything else, a veteran loves freedom. He can spend a whole afternoon doing nothing - just because it suits him and just because he has paid the price to do what he wants with his time. He also takes a personal pride in the freedom of others - in men and women attending the church of their choice; in friends voting how they choose; and in children sleeping quietly, without fear to interrupt their slumber.

A veteran is every man grown up a little taller - a person who understands the awesome price of life's intangibles of freedom, justice and democracy. His motto is to live and let live. But, if he had to, if he had to choose between servitude and conflict, the veteran would once again answer a call to duty.

Because, above all - above all else - a veteran is an American.

Recently, we interviewed Tom Stone, a World War II veteran who lives in Amityville. Mr. Stone was a very nice gentleman and pleasant to work with. He had plenty of information to give us about the ways American Legion helped raise money and the care programs for veterans and their families.

Q: How did you support the country during the war?
A: I was a member of the United States Naval Reserve prior to WWII and was called to duty one year prior to war.

Q: What did you do in the Navy?
A: I was an old fashioned radio man. Meaning I had to repair as well as run the equipment.

Q: Where were you stationed?
A: In the North Atlantic and Guadalcanal and Guam in the Pacific.

Q: Did you buy war bonds?
A: Yes, they were taken out of my pay. My first house was paid for by these bonds.

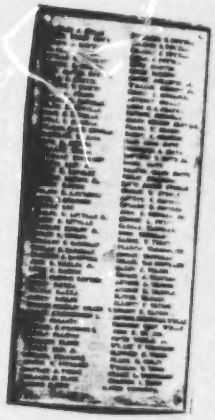
Q: Was the American Legion successful under the leaders during the war years?
A: Yes, their purpose was peace through strength. Their main purpose, however, was to care for veterans, their widows, and the maimed. To preserve law and order and the American Way. To serve the town first then the country, and then the state.

Q: Do you think the war helped people realize how important groups like the American Legion are?
A: Some yes, others no. Some people don't appreciate what the Legion has done, even some veterans. The Legion is responsible for the G.I. Bill of Rights and the Property Tax Exemption. This is a way to show the veterans that we appreciate their services. People aren't doing enough. Vietnam and Korean vets may go to Albany to try and get sepcial legislation for veterans. Some legislators listen but some don't, and the ones that do can help. Local legislators try to help but it's up to the vets to go and apply for proper tax exemption.

Q: Were the citizens of Amityville receptive to your attempts to raise money for American and Amityville veterans?
A: Yes, they are always receptive. Eighty percent of the money goes back to the community. They donate the money to different charities, scholarships, etc. The Legion isn't supposed to, and doesn't publicize this because they're supposed to be apolitical. The Legion is responsible for running the Memorial Day, July 4th, and Veteran's day parades. They also decorate the graves of soldiers but people steal the markers off of the graves. The members will go to funeral services of soldiers - even if they're not a legion member. Two-thirds of their funds are raised from Bingo.

Eagle in High School

Names of Soldiers
who Died in War
From Area



Four priests who
died in war

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Q: Did the people of Amityville, during the war years, have as much "spirit" towards Amityville as the citizens of today?
A: They had more. They donated a lot of food to the Legion to ship overseas to the soldiers.

Q: Did business in Amityville, in your opinion, do well? Was there mass production of war goods here also?
A: Everything was on austerity but they survived. Things were rationed out. Everyone made sacrifices. Margarine was colored by little capsules. War goods were produced by the Colgate Company and small factories.

Q: What memorials have been put up in Amityville for war veterans?
A: The clock in the triangle was erected in 1920 by the people for World War I veterans. The monument in front of the Legion Hall was erected for World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans. It's a National Historic Monument. The cannon in front of the V.F.W. Hall is for Vietnam vets.

Clock at triangle dedicated to veterans

Q: What made these people special or how did they earn them?
A: Their unselfishness. They were brave enough to serve their country when asked.

Q: During World War II, what were the feelings of the American Legionaires?
A: They were supportive of the country's efforts.

Q: What sort of fund raisers did you try?
A: We had Bingo and New Year's Eve dances. Eighty percent of the profits go back into programs. All the money over expenses goes back to the community. We donate money to Human Resources School, the Heart Association, the Veteran's Hospital in Northport, and support a camp for the handicapped (the parents and kids). It's on Merrick Road by Moriches Historical Society. The Legionaires don't receive anything for their services except self-gratification.

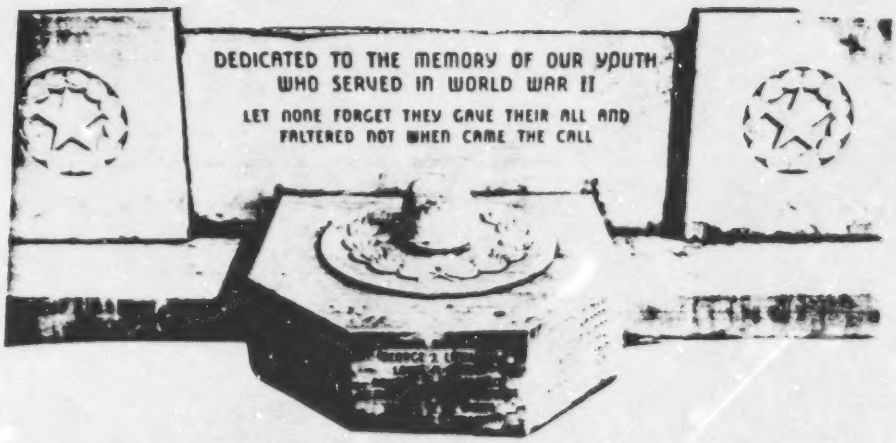
Q: Were they as successful as hoped?
A: Yes, we made enough to support the fund, but not as much as we would have liked.

Q: How did you help the soldiers from Amityville? Did you send them care packages?
A: We helped them by sending care packages, food, stationary, and toiletries. Legion members wrote letters of encouragement from Amityville.

Q: Did you help families of the soldiers from Amityville who died? How?
A: Yes, the primary purpose of the Legion was to get money, gain governmental assistance, and assist families by getting assistance through government agencies. Service officers help us in any possible way.

Q: Do you think that families and friends of veterans were afraid for their loved ones?
A: Yes, their families had no idea where they were, if they were at home or overseas. Everyone felt that way.

From our interview with Mr. Stone we found that the American Legion played a very important part in the morale and spirit of the citizens and soldiers of Amityville. They supported their country by supporting their neighbors. They held parades, dances, bingo, and other fundraisers to help raise money for their countrymen. A very important part of these morale boosters was the letters of encouragement that citizens wrote to the soldiers. I found this to be a very interesting and motivating interview.


DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF OUR YOUTH
WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR II
LET NONE FORGET THEY GAVE THEIR ALL AND
FALTERED NOT WHEN CAME THE CALL

National Monument in Front of American Legion Post

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